University of Alberta

Proactive Coping Among Female Adolescent Athletes

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine how female adolescent athletes attempted to cope with stressors over the course of a season. Thirteen members of a senior girls' basketball team (*M* age = 16 years) and two coaches (*M* age = 39 years) participated in pre- and post-season interviews and completed audio diaries over the course of the season (16 weeks total). Data were analysed at the group level and idiographically. Group level analyses revealed an 'atmosphere of criticism' within the team which influenced the stressors appraised by the athletes. Idiographic analyses resulted in the creation of three typologies of coping: reactive, exploratory, and proactive. Results suggest that temporal aspects in the deployment of coping strategies and eliciting and using feedback about coping efforts were critical in athletes' development of coping. Theoretical and applied implications of these results are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

To date, much stress and coping research within the sport psychology literature has employed retrospective, cross-sectional, and/or 'snap-shot' approaches which involve athletes recalling past stressors and coping experiences (Nicholls & Polman, 2007). Furthermore, the majority of these studies have employed group-level analyses of stressors and coping (with the notable exceptions of a few recent studies; Holt & Dunn, 2004; Holt, Berg, & Tamminen, 2007; Nicholls, Holt, Polman, & Bloomfield, 2006). Although these retrospective, cross-sectional, snap-shot, and group-level studies have documented the variety of stressors that athletes can face within the context of sport as well as the range of coping strategies used to deal with them, they do little to reveal the dynamic nature of the coping process. Indeed, researchers have identified the need for individual, longitudinal analyses in order to examine in greater detail the complex nature of coping (Lazarus, 1999; Nicholls & Polman, 2007; Schwarzer & Knoll, 2003; Tennen, Affleck, Armeli, & Carney, 2000). The present study specifically addressed this gap in the literature.

In addition to examining issues relevant to the coping literature, the present study was also intended as an initial inquiry that may help to establish a future research program that has wider implications beyond the coping literature. For example, evidence from several developed nations demonstrates that girls are significantly less active than boys (Australian Sport Commission, 2004; Craig & Cameron, 2004; Seefeldt & Ewing, 1997) and girls' sport participation is lower than that of boys (Craig & Cameron, 2004; Seefeldt & Ewing, 1997). Therefore, it is particularly important to examine issues related

to girls' experiences in sport, particularly during adolescence when withdrawal rates of girls are higher than boys' (Bailey, Wellard, & Dismore, 2005; Lenskyj, 1990; Vihjalmsson & Kristjansdottir, 2003).

Some stressors associated with participating in youth sport include pressure to succeed, conflicts with coaches or opponents, an overemphasis on winning, and other negative aspects of competition (Anshel & Delaney, 2001; Goyen & Anshel, 1998; Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1991). These stressors may contribute to sport withdrawal among young athletes. For example, Gould, Feltz, Horn, and Weiss (1982) reported that 52% of 10 to 18-year old former swimmers in the U.S. cited "not liking the pressure" as a reason for withdrawing from sport. A similar study by Klint and Weiss (1986) examined U.S. former youth gymnasts and found that reasons for withdrawal included "not having enough fun," "did not like the pressure," and "did not like the coaches."

Although the purpose of the present study was not to examine withdrawal per se, it is likely that the study of stressors and coping may have implications for improving performance and reducing sport withdrawal rates among female adolescent athletes. For example, it may be possible to determine how female adolescent athletes cope effectively with recurring stressors and (in the future) interventions may be more appropriately tailored to suit individual athlete's needs. An athlete may be taught appropriate coping strategies which may positively impact girls' physical activity levels by reducing dropout. Furthermore, such evidence may be useful for improving their experiences in sport.

Proactive coping provided the theoretical framework for the present study. According to Aspinwall and Taylor (1997), proactive coping consists of efforts undertaken in advance of the occurrence of a potential stressor in order to avoid it or

minimize its severity. This framework emphasizes the individual's coping resources as well as the recognition of stressors and the elicitation and use of feedback in learning about past coping efforts. To date, only one study (Holt et al., 2007) published within the sport literature has used the proactive coping framework to examine athletes' appraisals and recognition of stressors. Other studies, while not explicitly using proactive coping theory, have suggested that athletes may use proactive coping strategies to deal with stressors. These strategies include building confidence, maintaining concentration (Holt, 2003), maintaining a positive focus, time management and organization, and pre-competition preparation (Gould, Finch, & Jackson, 1993b). Thus, proactive coping may offer a novel and useful framework for examining stressors and coping in sport. Using the proactive coping framework may provide unique insights into adolescent females' experiences in this respect.

Purpose and Research Questions

The overall purpose of this research was to examine how female adolescent athletes attempted to cope with stressors over the course of a season. Using the proactive coping framework (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997) to guide the study, the three main research questions were:

1. What stressors were recurrent for female adolescent athletes over the course of a season?
2. What coping strategies did female adolescent athletes use to cope with stressors over the course of a season?
3. What constituted effective coping in sport for female adolescent athletes?

Definition of Key Terms

Stressor. A stressor is defined as a demand made on the individual which is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Coping process. Coping refers to an ongoing dynamic process which includes conscious and deliberate cognitive, behavioural, and affective efforts undertaken in order to manage appraised demands which are taxing or exceeding the individual's resources (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Proactive coping. Proactive coping refers to the efforts undertaken in advance of a potential stressor to prevent or modify it before it occurs.

Adolescence. The term adolescence was used in the present study to refer to the period of middle adolescence as defined by Steinberg (1993), ages 15-18 years.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Involvement in physical activity is important for optimal growth and development (Craig & Cameron, 2004) and has also been associated with psychological, physical, and social benefits for youth (President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport, 1997). Psychological health benefits of physical activity include increased self-esteem, reduced levels of stress, and reduced levels of depression (Singer, 1992). Physical benefits of physical activity include decreased risk of obesity, increased strength and increased muscle endurance (World Health Organization, 1995). Social benefits associated with physical activity include the development of social networks and learning how to sustain interpersonal relationships (Deem & Gilroy, 1998).

Despite the benefits associated with physical activity, researchers have suggested that three out of five Canadian children and youth are insufficiently active for optimal growth and development (Craig, Cameron, Russell, & Beaulieu, 2001). Concerns about physical inactivity are particularly salient for females. For example, evidence from several developed nations shows that girls are significantly less active than boys (Australian Sport Commission, 2004; Craig & Cameron, 2004; Seefeldt & Ewing, 1997). Sport provides one context where children and adolescents can engage in a range of physical activities. Although participation in organized sport programs is increasing (President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport, 1997), girls' sport participation lags behind that of boys (Craig & Cameron, 2004; Seefeldt & Ewing, 1997). In addition to lower rates of sport participation, findings show that girls are more likely to withdraw from organized sport programs than boys (Lenskyj, 1990; Vihjalmsson & Kristjansdottir,

2003), particularly during adolescence (see Bailey et al., 2005, for a review). Therefore, it is important to examine female adolescents' experiences in sport.

One reason girls drop out of sport could be because they are unable to cope with the stressors associated with sport participation (Petlichkoff, 1992; Smoll & Smith, 1996). A stressor is defined as a demand made on the individual which is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Stressors encountered by young athletes include (but are not limited to) an overemphasis on winning, fear of injury, conflicts with coaches or opponents, or parental pressures to succeed (Anshel & Delaney, 2001; Goyen & Anshel, 1998). These types of stressors may contribute to girls' sport withdrawal. For example, in a study of 106 U.S. youth gymnasts, Klint and Weiss (1986) reported that for the 37 youths who withdrew from the sport, their reasons for leaving included "did not like the pressure," "not having fun," and "did not like coaches." Similarly, Gould et al. (1982) reported that 52% of 10 to 18-year old former swimmers in the U.S. cited "not liking the pressure" as a reason for withdrawing from sport.

In sport, coping has generally been studied from a performance perspective. Research has shown that the use of appropriate coping strategies can have beneficial impacts on sport performance among highly competitive and elite performers (Dugdale, Eklund, & Gordon, 2002; Gould, Eklund, & Jackson, 1993a; Pensgaard & Duda, 2003). For example, Gould et al. (1993a) interviewed 20 U.S. Olympic wrestlers and found that the automaticity of coping responses was strongly related to coping effectiveness and improved performance. Similarly, Pensgaard and Duda (2003) surveyed 61 Olympic athletes and reported that perceived coping effectiveness predicted superior performance.

In summary, there were several compelling reasons for the current study. Specifically, examining the ways in which female athletes cope with stressors in sport may positively impact girls' physical activity levels by reducing dropout. Furthermore, such evidence may be useful for improving their sporting experiences and sport performance.

Theoretical Framework

This research was based on the theory of proactive coping proposed by Aspinwall and Taylor (1997). Building on Lazarus' (1999) process-oriented perspective, Aspinwall and Taylor defined proactive coping as the efforts undertaken in advance of a potential stressor to prevent or modify it before it occurs. The proactive coping framework consists of five stages: (a) resource accumulation, (b) attention-recognition, (c) initial appraisals of potential stressors, (d) preliminary coping efforts, and (e) the elicitation and use of feedback about the success of coping efforts (see Figure 1). Specifically, the process of coping is defined as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding" an individual's resources (Lazarus, 1999).

The proactive coping framework was derived from research on social cognition and social interaction. Recent studies in the general psychology literature among elderly (Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, & Eaton, 2006), rehabilitative (Greenglass, Marques, deRidder, & Behl, 2006) and psychiatric populations (Yanos, 2001) provide support for the use of the proactive coping framework. Proactive coping may be a useful framework for understanding coping among adolescent females, but this theory has rarely been used to examine coping in sport (these studies are reported later in this chapter).

The first stage of the proactive coping model – resource accumulation – involves acquiring resources such as organizational and planning skills, a social network, and proactive coping skills (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). It is suggested that individuals who build a reservoir of resources will be better able to cope with a wide variety of stressors in comparison to people who have fewer coping resources available to them. The second stage – attention-recognition – refers to an individual's ability to detect potential stressors coming by interpreting warning signs in the environment.

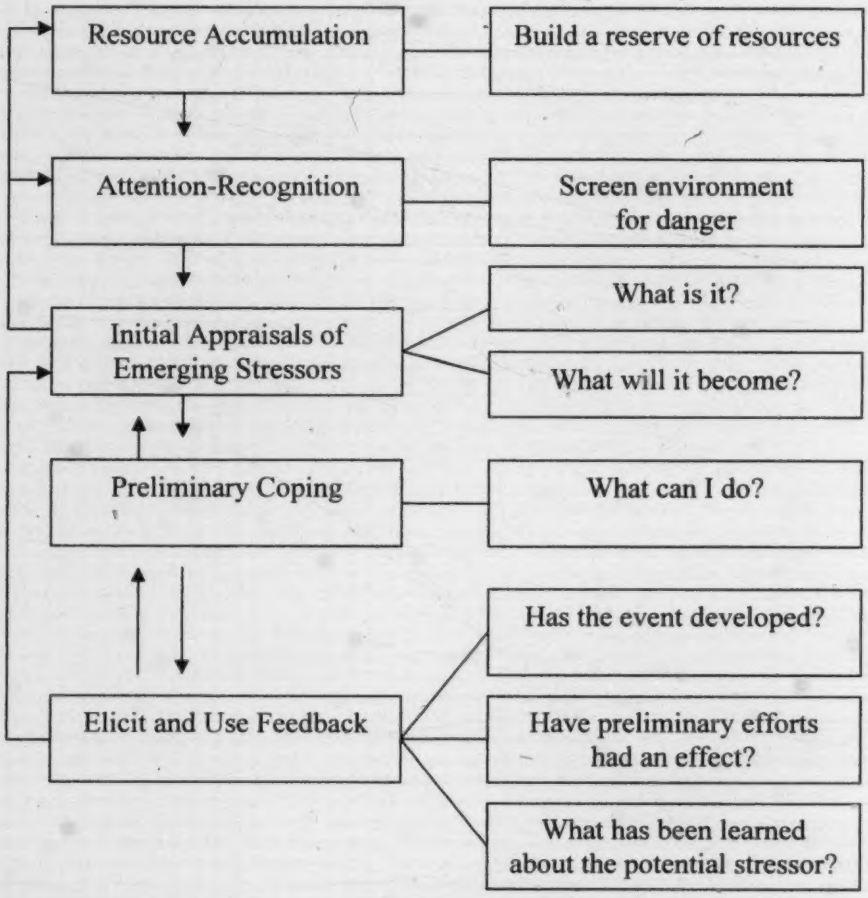
Resource Accumulation
Build a reserve of resources
Attention-Recognition
Screen environment for danger
What is it?
Initial Appraisals of Emerging Stressors
What will it become?
Preliminary Coping
What can I do?
Has the event developed?
Elicit and Use Feedback
Have preliminary efforts had an effect?
What has been learned about the potential stressor?

Figure 1. Framework of proactive coping (from Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997).

Recognition of potential stressors may be facilitated by a future temporal orientation. That is, an individual must be able to anticipate the future based on environmental cues and modify her/his behaviour accordingly. Anticipation of stressors may be linked to the athlete's experience and history of involvement in competitive sport, as they may have prior knowledge of potential stressors they may encounter. It was also suggested that an individual's social network might play a role in the detection of potentially stressful events at this stage. Consider in the context of sport a rumour among team players that the coach will be running an especially hard practice. In this case, the athletes may mentally or physically prepare themselves for the upcoming practice, thus reducing the potential stressor from occurring or reducing its severity. In this scenario, the athletes' social network is critical in the initial detection of potential stressors.

One potential risk related to scanning the environment for danger is hypervigilance, which may lead athletes to attend to too many potential or imagined threats at one time, such that they are unable to manage any one of them (McGrath & Beehr, 1990). Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) suggested that individuals may need to learn how to regulate their attention to be vigilant of some threats and be able to orient themselves toward those which are most likely to threaten valued goals.

The third component of the proactive coping framework is the initial appraisal of emerging stressors (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). This stage involves the tasks of defining the problem and regulating arousal. Defining the problem entails determining the potential magnitude of the problem, which is influenced by environmental cues or past experience in dealing with the stressor. Defining the problem is a task related to the individual's level of arousal at this stage in the proactive coping framework. For

example, a challenge appraisal of a potential stressor – defined as an appraisal that difficulties which stand in the way of gain can be overcome (Lazarus, 1999) – may lead to the mobilization of energy to meet the demands of the task. Alternatively, a threat appraisal, which is an appraisal that harm or loss, is possible or likely to occur in the near future (Lazarus, 1999), may lead to an increase in negative emotional arousal which can impede subsequent coping efforts. Aspinwall and Taylor argued that the definition of the problem and the regulation of arousal interact during the initial appraisal stage to either facilitate or hinder the coping process.

The fourth stage of proactive coping consists of preliminary coping, where the individual makes initial attempts to cope with the stressors. The nature of the individual's appraisal will necessarily alter the type of coping strategies used to cope with the stressor. A critical implication of this stage is that active coping will uncover more information about the potential stressor than avoidant coping, thus making active coping more effective than avoidant coping. Avoidant coping can involve cognitive as well as behavioural efforts to remove oneself from a stressful situation. Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) maintained that even if an active coping effort is unsuccessful in alleviating the stressor, it will still confer information about the problem which can be used in subsequent coping efforts. Active coping includes strategies such as obtaining information, goal-setting, and problem-solving, whereas avoidant forms of coping include self-blame, wishful thinking, or physically withdrawing from the situation.

The distinction between using active and avoidant as classifications for coping strategies has recently been disputed within the general psychology literature. In a critique of various category systems for classifying coping, Skinner, Edge, Altman, and

Sherwood (2003) argued that because ways of coping are multidimensional, distinctions such as active and avoidant are not useful for the study of coping. Instead, they recommended that coping strategies are best classified according to action types (e.g., mastery, proximity seeking, accommodation). These authors argued that distinctions based on the adaptive function of the coping strategy helps to clarify the complex structure of coping and offers a way for researchers to examine the ways in which coping strategies manifest themselves at different developmental levels (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007).

Finally the fifth stage of proactive coping involves eliciting and using feedback to modify preliminary coping efforts (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). This stage involves assessing the development of the stressor itself, the effects of preliminary coping efforts, and deciding whether or not the event requires further action.

Possible limitations to proactive coping framework. Given that the framework of proactive coping (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997) has rarely been used in sport, it is important to identify some possible limitations to the framework. First, the framework privileges proactive coping as an ideal form of coping, superior to reactive coping. Aspinwall (2005) remarked that there may be some contexts in which planning and proactive coping have negative connotations in that they may seem presumptuous or calculating, rather than open or spontaneous. It is important not to overemphasize the role of proactive coping and to acknowledge the potential flexibility of reactive coping in dealing with stressors.

Another assumption of the proactive coping framework is that all individuals progress through each stage from resource accumulation to the elicitation and use of

feedback about coping efforts in a similar manner. This may not be the case for all individuals, specifically for adolescents who may not engage in reflective practices which could enable them to learn from their past coping efforts.

Although not stated, the framework may assume homogeneity in proactive coping across contexts, that is, individuals who cope proactively in one context are assumed to cope proactively in a variety of domains. Although personality factors may play a role in the coping process (Lazarus, 1999), there may be variability in the use of proactive coping across multiple contexts. Within the health psychology literature, Ouwehand, DeRidder, and Bensing (2006) reported that in a study of 123 older adults (63 men and 60 women), proactive coping efforts varied significantly within the same individual across different situations when describing coping with loss. Therefore, whereas the framework of proactive coping proposed by Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) is useful, it is still a relatively new conceptualization requiring further research to enhance understanding of how it may apply to sport (and other contexts).

An Alternative Theory of Proactive Coping

Given the exploratory purpose of the present study, and the fact that the theory of proactive coping proposed by Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) has rarely been used in sport, it is relevant to briefly explore other proactive coping theory. Schwarzer and Knoll (2003) provided an alternate framework for the study of positive coping, which subsumes reactive, anticipatory, preventive, and proactive coping (see Figure 2). According to Schwarzer and Knoll, coping can be classified as reactive, anticipatory, preventive, and proactive according to its temporal and certainty aspects. When coping with events which have already occurred in the past, an individual engages in reactive coping.

Anticipatory coping is described as the management of known risks by investing one's resources to prevent or modify the stressor or maximize anticipated benefits. If an individual perceives a threat or challenge which is fairly certain and will occur in the near future, s/he will engage in anticipatory coping. Preventive coping, according to Schwarzer and Knoll (2003), also concerns stressors occurring in the future, albeit less imminent and perhaps less certain than those involved in anticipatory coping. An individual engaging in preventive coping aims to build up resources in an effort to prepare for uncertain events in the long run with no knowledge if the event will actually occur. Schwarzer and Knoll distinguished proactive coping from anticipatory and preventive coping on the grounds that proactive coping does not involve negative appraisals of harm, loss, or threat. Rather, proactive coping involves building up resources to facilitate promotion towards challenging goals and personal growth.

Aspinwall and Taylor's (1997) definition of *proactive coping* is most similar to Schwarzer and Knoll's (2003) definition of *preventive coping* in that both involve the perception of uncertain threats and potential stressors and the efforts undertaken to prevent a negative outcome from occurring. According to Schwarzer and Knoll, proactive coping "involves goal management instead of risk management" (p. 396), where individuals initiate a path of action and create opportunities for growth.

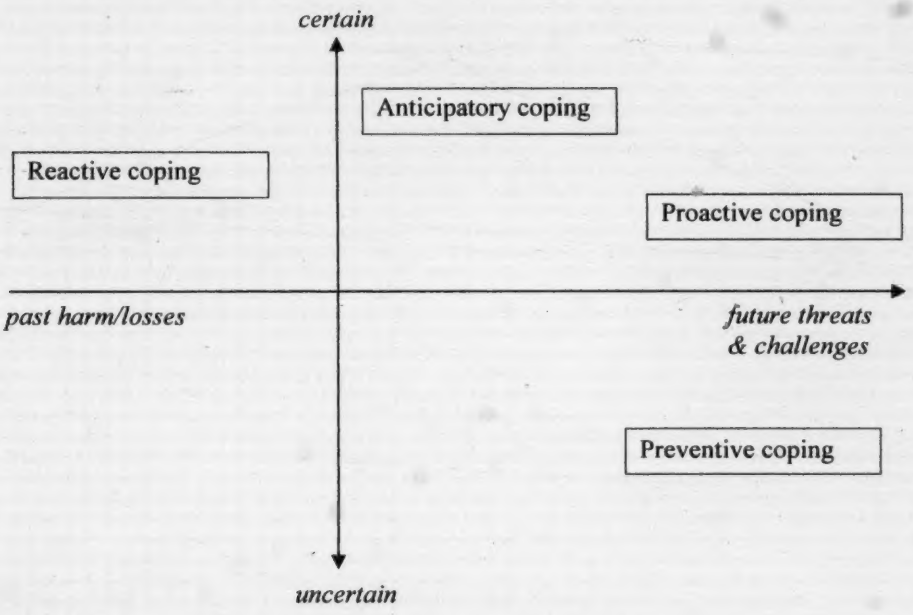

Figure 2. An alternate framework for the study of positive coping (from Schwarzer & Knoll, 2003).

The key difference is that Schwarzer and Knoll's definition of proactive coping reflects only the individual's appraisals of challenge but does not include appraisals of threat or harm. In the case of the current study, the aim is to examine situations which may be appraised as potentially threatening or challenging to the athlete, thus implicating the use of Aspinwall and Taylor's definition of proactive coping, which concerns appraisals of threat and challenge.

Methodological Implications

Reflecting on coping in general, Lazarus (1999) noted that research requires a focus on the coping process in which individuals are studied in different contexts and at different times, and asserted that "the best research design for this kind of research is longitudinal" (p. 114). Schwarzer and Knoll (2003) suggested that "coping can only be

understood when it is regarded as a process, which implies a longitudinal approach to measurement" (p. 405). Schwarzer and Knoll also argued that it is not sufficient to study coping by selecting several points in time because the researcher cannot know the optimal time window when significant changes in coping take place. They suggested that continuous measurement is needed to examine proactive coping. This position is supported by Tennen et al. (2000), who advocated a process-oriented, idiographic-nomothetic approach to studying coping because such a focus allows the researcher to capture stressors, coping efforts and outcomes closer to their actual occurrence, minimizing recall error among the participants. Therefore, it is incumbent upon researchers who wish to use process-oriented models of coping to use research designs that permit the analysis of coping as a process.

Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) noted that proactive coping may be difficult to detect due to the fact that it focuses on the activities undertaken in advance of the stressor's occurrence. As such, successful copers may not experience the stressor and thus be excluded from studies of stress and coping altogether because they appear to be well-adjusted, healthy individuals. This creates a methodological challenge because it is necessary to examine proactive coping over extended periods of time in order to develop a comprehensive picture of the coping process.

Proactive Coping Research

Studies from the general psychology literature have provided preliminary evidence as to the benefits of proactive coping using the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI; Greenglass, 1998). The PCI is theoretically based on Schwarzer's (1999) proactive coping theory and consists of seven sub-scales and 55 items. Cronbach's alpha for the

sub-scales ranged from .61 to .85 in two different samples (Greenglass, Schwarzer, & Taubert, 1999), although for the proactive coping subscale it ranged from .80 to .85 in the two samples. Greenglass (2000) examined the correlation between proactive coping and work stress among adults using the PCI. Proactive coping was negatively correlated with state anger, depression, emotional exhaustion, and cynicism, and positively correlated with life satisfaction, and the perception of fair treatment in the workplace. These findings suggested that proactive coping was beneficial in dealing with stressors. However, the PCI has not been administered to adolescents, which limits the generalizability of these findings as they relate to the current research. The PCI and proactive coping as a whole have yet to be examined in the field of sport psychology.

Few studies have examined proactive coping efforts among youth and adolescents in general psychology. One study to examine coping among adolescents was conducted by Copeland and Hess (1995), using the Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences (A-COPE) scale to examine the coping responses of 244 adolescents (*M* age = 14.4 yrs) in dealing with life stressors. Findings revealed that the top five most frequently endorsed coping strategies for adolescent females were catharsis, self-reliance, adopting a proactive orientation, being humorous, and using positive imagery. Additionally, the females in the study ($n = 126$) had significantly higher mean scores than males ($n = 118$) for the proactive orientation subscale. Items associated with this subscale included trying to keep up friendships or make new friends, saying nice things to other people, and organizing your life. Within a proactive coping framework, these items might be considered resources related to building a social network and developing organizational skills. The findings of Copeland and Hess' (1995) study suggest that

proactive coping is an appropriate theoretical framework for conducting research with female adolescents.

In the sport psychology literature, only two studies to date have referred to the use of proactive coping strategies. Holt (2003) conducted a case study of the coping skills of a 31 year old male professional cricketer. Holt defined and coded some of the athlete's coping strategies as 'proactive coping.' These strategies were confidence building and maintaining concentration in situations where he anticipated threat. In situations where an appraisal of harm or loss had already occurred, the athlete used coping strategies labelled as 'reactive,' which were self-talk and displaying resilience. However, this study was not explicitly based on a theoretical framework of proactive coping. Rather, the labels of proactive and reactive coping were used to describe inductively derived findings. Additionally, it was only an exploratory study with one athlete, which severely limits the generalizability of findings. However, this study does provide some evidence that athletes may use some kind of proactive attempts to cope with stressors.

Holt et al. (2007) used a conceptual context based on Aspinwall and Taylor's (1997) framework of proactive coping to examine stressors and coping among ten female collegiate volleyball players before and after an important tournament. Coping strategies reported by the athletes included increasing practices, adhering to a pregame routine, positive self talk, and communicating with teammates. Findings showed that athletes who reported consistent coping also reported coping more effectively than athletes who reported inconsistent or partially consistent coping. Also athletes with more experience coped better than younger athletes, suggesting that experience may contribute to athletes' preparation to cope with potential stressors. However this study only examined coping

prior to and following one tournament and did not assess the consistency of athletes' coping over an extended period of time. Despite the lack of studies which have used a framework of proactive coping to study the coping process in sport, there is preliminary evidence supporting the adoption of such an approach.

Stressors in Youth Sport

As noted, sport is a context which may contain stressors for the young athlete (Anshel & Delaney, 2001; Goyen & Anshel, 1998). Evidence suggests that male and female athletes appraise stressors differently (Anshel, Porter, & Quek, 1998; Goyen & Anshel, 1998). Goyen and Anshel (1998) surveyed 65 adult (*M* age = 26.6 yrs, *SD* = 2.26) and 74 adolescent (*M* age = 15.4 yrs, *SD* = 1.62) high-performance athletes and examined perceived stress intensity as a function of age and gender. Findings showed that adolescent and adult females reported higher stress intensity than males for the stressor 'social evaluation' (i.e., getting hassled or booed by spectators or parents' criticism). This finding suggested that adolescent girls may place more importance than boys on social evaluation and feedback when participating in high-performance sport. Gender differences in stressor-appraisals have also been reported in the general psychology literature. Ptacek, Smith and Zanas (1992) reported that in a sample of 186 male and female college students, males and females differed significantly in their appraisal of events as either threats or challenges; females appraised significantly fewer events as challenges and experienced significantly more stress than males over a 21-day period.

Given that evidence has shown gender differences in stressor-appraisals among young athletes it is important to consider the specific issues facing male and female athletes respectively. Because of increasing concerns about declining patterns of physical

activity among adolescent females (Craig & Cameron, 2004; Seefeldt & Ewing, 1997), there is a particular need to examine stressor-appraisals among female athletes. Similar to coping research, a major limitation of the sport psychology research on stressors is that researchers have used 'snapshot' correlational designs to identify stressors at a single point in time, or studies have used retrospective interviews to recall and identify stressors (e.g. Scanlan et al., 1991). However, because stressors, coping, and subsequent stressor-reappraisal are considered to be part of a process (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Lazarus, 1999), longitudinal research designs are imperative to understand more about how stressors (re)occur over time. Thus, the first question addressed by this study was: What stressors did adolescent female athletes appraise over the course of a season?

Coping in Youth Sport

The construction of categories of coping has been a central endeavour of coping research and a range of coping strategies which are used across contexts have been well-documented. However, it has been argued that definitions of coping have been 'borrowed' from work with adults and are not 'developmentally friendly' (Holt, Hoar, & Fraser, 2005; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). Skinner et al. (2003) reviewed 100 assessments of coping and collected more than 400 different category labels for coping strategies, which represents the complexity of understanding coping as a process. In an effort to establish a comprehensive list of categories of coping, Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck (2007) presented a list of 12 'families of coping' which are useful for examining coping from a developmental perspective, as they are classified based on the adaptive function of the coping strategy. Specifically, the 'families of coping' offer a way for researchers to identify how different coping strategies may fulfill similar adaptive

functions at different developmental stages. For example, young children may use behavioural strategies (such as behavioural avoidance) whereas older children may use more cognitive strategies (such as mental withdrawal) to fulfill the same adaptive function of 'escape.' Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck's research concerning the development 'families of coping' represents an important step in the examination of coping among youth and adolescents. However, research within the sport psychology literature has not yet adopted this developmentally-friendly way of classifying coping strategies.

Just as there are gender differences in young athletes' stressor appraisals, similar trends have been revealed in coping strategies used by young athletes. In a review of childhood and adolescence sport coping literature, Holt, Hoar, and Fraser (2005) reported that a consistent finding was females tended to use emotion-focused coping whereas males tended to use problem-focused coping to deal with stressors. Emotion-focused coping refers to a coping attempt which aims to regulate the emotional response to the stressor, whereas problem-focused coping is a coping attempt which aims to manage or alter the stressor itself. For instance, Madden, Kirkby, and McDonald (1989) examined the coping strategies of 12 male and 9 female middle-distance runners aged 14 – 20 years. Female athletes tended to use more emotion-focused coping strategies than males when experiencing a slump in competitive performance. Similar gender differences have been reported in the general psychology literature. For example, Frydenberg and Lewis (2000) found that adolescent females sought more social support and engaged in more wishful thinking and tension reduction strategies than males when coping with stressors.

Thus, it would seem that males and females have different coping responses in dealing with stressors.

As described previously, theorists illustrate coping as a process (e.g., Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Lazarus, 1999). However, few studies in the sport psychology literature have used research designs that permitted the assessment of coping as a process (Holt et al., 2005). Additionally, there is little information about the coping process which describes how female adolescent athletes cope with day-to-day stressors as well as stressors which are recurrent over the course of a season. One longitudinal study examining stressors experienced by female athletes was conducted by Holt and Dunn (2004), in which four high-performance adult female soccer players maintained daily diaries over a 6-week period. The athletes reported experiencing several stressors at once which required the use of different coping responses, which in turn influenced subsequent stressor appraisals. Findings suggested that coping was a complex, dynamic, and recursive process; however this study was conducted with a small sample of female athletes aged 21-28. Furthermore, research has shown that coping may change with development (Holt et al., 2005), and thus the coping process for female adolescent athletes may be different than that of female adults.

Longitudinal coping research has been conducted with male adolescent athletes but not with female athletes. Nicholls, Holt, Polman, and James (2005) used a diary approach to examine stressors and coping strategies among 11 elite adolescent male golfers from the UK during their season. They found that the number of coping strategies used by the golfers increased during the most important competitions of the season, as did the number of stressors reported. Additionally, four stressors comprised over 75% of

all 369 stressors reported, suggesting that a small number of stressors seem to recur over time. Nicholls et al.'s findings support the process-oriented perspective of coping, but again the small sample size and inclusion of only males limits the generalizability of the findings to female athletes. Further, given that research suggests there may be gender differences in the coping responses of male and female athletes (Frydenberg & Lewis, 2000; Madden et al., 1989), an examination of the coping process of adolescent female athletes is warranted. Accordingly, the second research question that was addressed by this study was: What coping strategies did female adolescent athletes use to cope with stressors over the course of a season?

Coping Effectiveness in Sport

Effective coping strategies have been traditionally conceptualized as coping efforts which bring about success in managing situational demands (Folkman, 1984). However, no single coping strategy can be universally effective or ineffective, because within the coping process each stressor and subsequent coping response is contextual. A coping strategy which is effective in one situation may be ineffective in another situation. Due to the complexity of assessing coping effectiveness, Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) advocated the use of both a goodness-of-fit approach as well as an outcome approach when assessing coping effectiveness. The goodness-of-fit approach suggests effective coping is a result of a fit between the objective situation, situational appraisal, and the selected coping response. An appropriate appraisal of the situation is likely to lead to the selection of an effective coping strategy given the context of the stressor. An outcome approach entails that coping effectiveness is evaluated according to the degree to which a

coping strategy has a desired effect an outcome which is valued. A coping strategy which promotes a desired outcome is considered an effective strategy.

In evaluating the effectiveness of coping strategies in sport, some researchers (i.e., Nicholls et al., 2005) have adopted a goodness-of-fit approach as it is compatible with Lazarus's (1999) process perspective on stress and coping. However, the model of proactive coping suggested by Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) assumes a conceptual difference in the definition of coping effectiveness than that traditionally offered by stress and coping researchers. Within a framework of proactive coping, effectiveness is best evaluated by combining a goodness-of-fit approach and an outcome approach (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004) in order to assess the extent to which a coping strategy reduces the actual or perceived demands of a stressor or mobilizes the necessary resources to deal with these demands.

Within the context of sport, relatively little research has examined coping effectiveness. One of the difficulties in assessing coping effectiveness concerns the use of subjective versus objective evaluations of effective coping. Ntoumanis and Biddle (1998) advocated the use of measurement which captured the subjective nature of the coping process through interviews or by asking individuals to rate the extent to which different coping strategies were effective in achieving desired outcomes. This would enable researchers to obtain data relevant to both the goodness-of-fit and outcomes models. Using a subjective approach to evaluate coping effectiveness, Nicholls, Holt, and Polman (2005) found that strategies associated with effective coping for 18 elite male golfers included rationalizing, re-appraising, positive self-talk, seeking social support, breathing exercises, relaxation, following a routine, and blocking. Strategies associated with

ineffective coping included trying too hard, routine changes, speeding up, negative thoughts, and a lack of coping attempts. The study's phenomenological design allowed the researchers to examine athletes' recalled experiences dealing with specific situations, but was limited in observing how the coping process changes over time. In order to fully understand the contextualized nature of the coping process, it is necessary to examine coping and coping effectiveness over an extended period of time through longitudinal research designs. Schwarzer and Knoll (2003) noted that "the assessment of coping does not equal the assessment of most other constructs in psychology, in particular not the way personality is typically measured. Coping is highly situation-dependent, and it changes rapidly and unforeseeably as the stressful life encounter unfolds" (pp. 403-404). Considering that coping strategies may be effective in certain situations and ineffective in others (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004), longitudinal research is needed to examine what constitutes coping effectiveness in sport over the course of a season.

There is some evidence to suggest the use of a proactive coping framework may be appropriate for assessing coping effectiveness. Eubank and Collins (2000) used a longitudinal research design to examine the coping process and coping effectiveness among 22 youth sport participants aged 10-14 years. Although this study was not explicitly based on proactive coping theory, interviews with the athletes revealed that coping strategies which were deemed effective in dealing with competitive state anxiety were positive self-statement (thinking ahead, relaxed, positive self-talk) and maintaining positive focus, whereas ineffective coping strategies were lack of concentration, uncertainty, pre-occupation with significant others, and negative self-talk. These findings are supported by research which suggests that effective coping among adolescents

involves strategies which use mental preparation, use of cognitive strategies, and active coping (see Holt et al., 2005).

Evidence from the general psychology literature suggests that gender differences may exist between males in females in regards to the perceived effectiveness of their coping strategies. Sigmon, Stanton, and Snyder (1995) found that females rated emotion-focused coping as significantly more effective in dealing with stressors than males. Other gender differences may exist in the overall effectiveness of coping strategies. Ptacek et al. (2004) found that females reported significantly less overall effectiveness in coping with life events than males. One limitation in research examining coping effectiveness is that researchers using cross-sectional designs (e.g., Ptacek et al., 2004; Sigmon et al., 1995) fail to fully examine coping as a process. Sigmon et al. recommended the use of longitudinal research in order to examine how the frequency of coping use relates to perceptions of effectiveness, while Ptacek et al. recommended the consideration of gender as a factor in future coping research.

To date, it appears that only one study has examined gender differences in regard to coping effectiveness within a sport context. Campen and Roberts (2001) found that in a sample of 52 recreational runners, significantly more females than males reported coping strategies related to social support to be effective. Campen and Roberts provided support for the use of context-specific coping strategies within sport, however the use of a correlational research design did not allow for an examination of the coping process as it changed over time. Thus, a third research question addressed in this study was: What constituted effective coping in sport for female adolescent athletes over the course of a season?

Purpose

To recap, the purpose of this exploratory study was to examine how female adolescent athletes attempted to cope with stressors over the course of a season. To reiterate, the research questions addressed were:

1. What stressors were recurrent for adolescent female athletes over the course of a season?
2. What coping strategies did female adolescent athletes use to cope with stressors over the course of a season?
3. What constituted effective coping in sport for female adolescent athletes over the course of a season?

CHAPTER 3:

METHOD

Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

Several coping inventories have been used in the sport psychology literature, including the MCOPE inventory (Crocker & Graham, 1995), and the Ways of Coping in Sport Scale (WOCS; Madden et al., 1989). These measures are useful for identifying the types and frequencies of stressors and coping strategies, and data can be used to reveal associations between coping and other variables such as positive and negative affect (Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1998) and personality factors such as dispositional optimism and pessimism (Gaudreau & Blondin, 2004). However, given the purposes of this study, qualitative methods offered two distinct advantages over the use of inventories. First, qualitative methods can be used to assess the range of coping strategies athletes used to deal with stressors. This can be an advantage because Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) noted that "typically coping inventories are not sensitive to [a] pattern of coping efforts because the inventories require participants to report all of the coping strategies they used without regard to the order" (p. 428). Second, obtaining qualitative data collected over an extended period of time enables researchers to descriptively examine the dynamic nature of the coping process over time (Lazarus, 1999).

Case Study Methodology

Qualitative research is an 'umbrella term' which includes a range of specific methodologies. The present study adopted a case study methodology, which was described by Stake (1995) as "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances … looking for the

detail of interaction with its context" (xi). Given the contextual nature of the coping process (Lazarus, 1999), an instrumental case study approach was appropriate for the examination of stressors and coping among female adolescent athletes. Within instrumental case study research, the case (i.e., a team of athletes and their coaches) is used to shed light on a set of issues (i.e., stressors and coping), which differs from an 'intrinsic case study' which refers to understanding more about a particular case rather than using the case to learn more about certain issues.

Patton (2002) noted that case studies may be nested or layered, in which the team as a unit of study is comprised of a number of individual cases, namely the athletes. Stake (1995) referred to this type of work as a collective case study, in which a collection of cases (i.e., all the athletes) is studied to learn about stressors and coping among individuals who belong to the same team. Hence, combining the perspectives of Stake and Patton, the chosen methodology could be described as a collective instrumental case study.

Researcher-as-Instrument

Within qualitative research the researcher is considered the research instrument *par excellence* (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). As such, it is important to explicitly address the researcher's assumptions. I approached this study from an interpretivist paradigm (Sparkes, 1992). Methodologically, assumptions associated with an interpretivist paradigm include the idea that it is possible to identify and describe a shared understanding of a phenomenon. The ontological assumption (regarding the nature of existence) of the interpretivist paradigm is that reality and the individual who observes it cannot be separated. That is, knowledge is a co-construction between the researcher and

the researched. Epistemologically (concerning the nature, origin, and scope of knowledge), interpretivism assumes that multiple realities of an experience can exist. Furthermore, those who subscribe to an interpretivist paradigm posit that knowledge is not an independently existing reality, but rather it is seen as something that is socially constructed. In the case of the current study, by using a collective case study approach, I followed Stake's (1995) advice in terms of attempting to "seek out and present multiple perspectives of activities and issues, discovering and portraying the different views" (p. 134) in order to construct a contextualised account of athletes' stressors and coping experiences over a season.

It would be foolish to assume the researcher would be able to remain fully objective while conducting qualitative research. The interpretivist research paradigm acknowledges the researcher's own experiences as interpretive knowledge that "inevitably reflects the values of the inquirer, even as it seeks to reconstruct others' sense of meaning" (Greene, 1990, p. 238). In keeping with this, it is important to maintain interpretive awareness, acknowledge subjectivity and address any implications thereof, in order to enhance subjectivity and to more fully understand it. In conducting research in the area of stressors and coping in the context of sport, it is important to acknowledge that I did not participate in highly competitive sports but participated in recreational sports. I do value sport participation in competitive contexts, which may have influenced my interpretation of the results of the current study. The strength of these biases lies in my desire to fully understand the process of stress and coping among adolescent female athletes in order to improve the quality of their sport participation and their competitive performances.

Recruitment

Female adolescent athletes participating in team sports were purposively sampled (Berg, 2001) through a high school in Edmonton, AB. The sampling criteria were based on the following requirements. First, female athletes were recruited because females may appraise stressors differently than males (Anshel et al., 1998; Goyen & Anshel, 1998; Ptacek et al., 1992). Second, athletes competing on a high school team with high expectations for success were recruited to ensure that athletes' experiences in a potentially stressful sport environment could be assessed. Third, a team sport was sampled on the basis that the social network of team sports could provide key information about the interaction of personal factors with the social environment in the detection and interpretation of potential stressors and coping efforts (cf. Holt & Hogg, 2002).

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Board in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta and the Edmonton Public School Board. The head coach (who was also a teacher at the school) of a senior girls' basketball team at a large high school was approached to consider participating in this study. Permission was granted with the additional support of the school's Principal. Athletes were provided with an information letter describing the study during a pre-season meeting. The principal investigator read through the letter and answered any questions pertaining to the study. Athletes wishing to participate returned a completed informed consent form signed by a parent or guardian, as the athletes were under the age of 18. It was emphasized that participation in this study was not a mandatory part of team membership, and that there would be no negative consequences for non-participation. The response rate was 100%.

Participants

Primary data were collected from the 13 female athletes who were members of the senior girls' basketball team at a large high school in Western Canada. The average age of the athletes was 16.0 years (*SD* = 0.89 years), and the average length of time playing organized basketball was 6.2 years (*SD* = 1.8 years). All participants were middle-class, and ten of the athletes self-reported as being of European-Caucasian ethnicity, while three were of African-Canadian or African/European ethnicity. Ten of the athletes reported that they engaged in at least one other competitive organized sport outside of basketball. The team played 36 games during the season from December to mid-March. The team's record during the regular season was 16 wins and 11 losses, and their post-season (playoff/championships) record was 6 wins and 3 losses.

Secondary data were collected from the two female coaches of the team (aged 29 years and 49 years), both of whom were of European-Caucasian ethnicity.[1] The head coach had a Physical Education specialization and 6 years coaching experience, including a position as an assistant coach at the university level and was head coach of a provincial basketball team. The assistant coach had 30 years coaching experience, including coaching at the university level and had won several coaching awards. Both coaches were middle-class, and had completed at least an undergraduate university degree. Coaching the senior girls' basketball team was a voluntary commitment.

Data Collection

Demographics. Participants completed a one-page demographic questionnaire (see Appendix 1.0) to establish age, grade, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. All participants were assigned participant numbers (participant one = P1) to ensure

[1] Data provided by the coaches in this study are used to describe the context of the team (results section I).

anonymity. A master list containing participant names and corresponding participant numbers was kept in a locked file cabinet in a locked office available only to the researcher.

Sources of data. Primary sources of data were collected via interviews with athletes and the athletes also made verbal recordings in audio diaries. Secondary sources of data were coach interviews, coach audio-diaries, and participant observation. An overview of the process of data collection is provided (Figure 3).

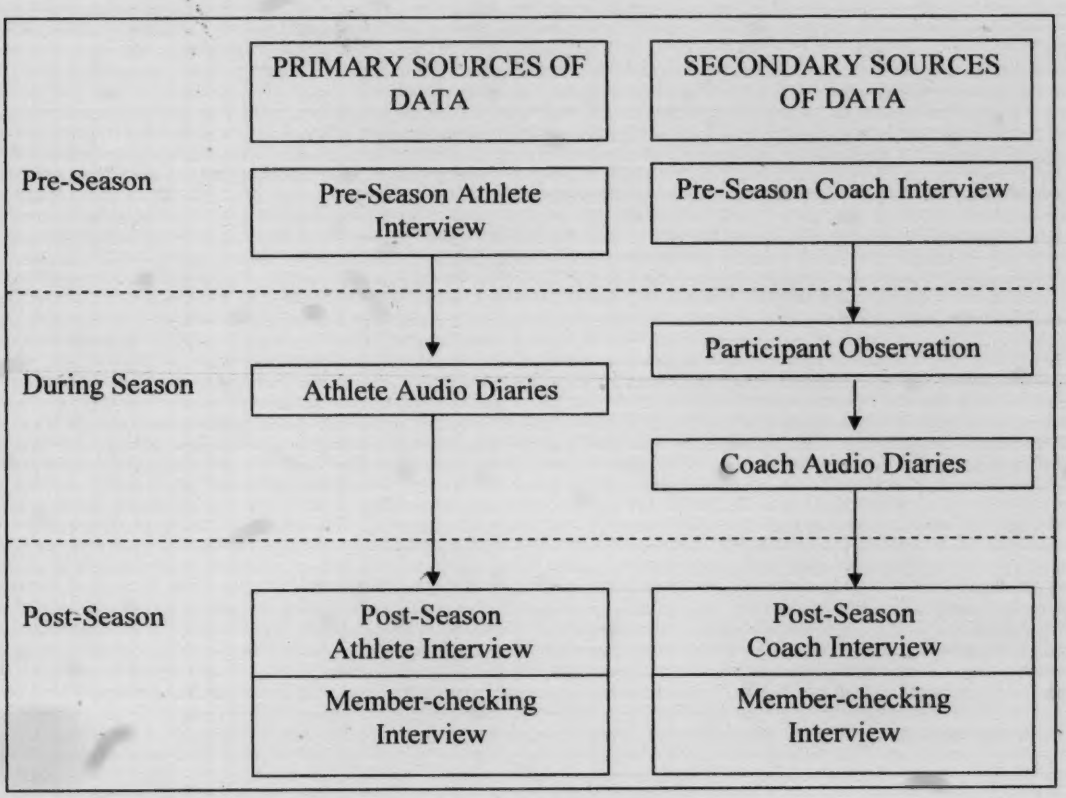

Figure 3. Overview of data collection sources and procedures.

Primary Sources of Data

Pre-season athlete interview. The initial pre-season interviews were conducted over a span of a week in a small meeting room at the high school so as to minimize distractions and interruptions during the interview. Interviews were scheduled with the athletes before or after school, at lunch, or after practice so as not to interfere with their classes or practice schedule. To gain an understanding of the athletes' experiences in sport, the interview guide consisted of main guiding questions, probe questions, and follow-up questions to ensure the researcher accurately understood the responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

At the very start of the interview participants were also asked to draw a concept map (see Holt & Mandigo, 2004) of the people who provide them with social support when they dealt with stressors, as well as people who may alert them to potential stressors. This mapping exercise was used to help participants relax in the interview situation and help the researcher commence the process of building rapport, which is essential for collecting high quality data from adolescents (Morrison & Anders, 2001). Concept maps were collected by the researcher at the end of the interview but were not used in the subsequent analysis.

The main areas covered in the first interview were (1) sport involvement history; (2) goals; (3) sport stressors; (4) life stressors; (5) coping; (6) future temporal orientation; (7) social network; and (8) follow-up (Appendix 2.0: Athlete pre-season interview). The interview questions were informed by the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI; Greenglass, 1998) and the model of proactive coping proposed by Aspinwall and Taylor (1997). However, using open-ended questions also enabled participants to discuss issues that

were personally relevant to them, thus broadening the scope of the interview beyond the PCI. Data from the pre-season interviews were transcribed and analysed before the post-season interviews were conducted.

Audio diaries. Each participant was issued with a hand-held audio recording device (a 'dictaphone'). They were instructed to make recordings much in the same way that they would use a diary. However, to ensure that they reported incidents relating to stressors and coping, each athlete was given a prompt sheet (following Holt & Dunn, 2004). The prompts originally used by Holt and Dunn were re-structured to reflect content related to proactive coping (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Schwarzer & Knoll, 2003) and the PCI (Greenglass, 1998). Each participant received a prompt sheet covering the following areas: (1) Record date and time; (2) What stressors did you face in your most recent basketball game/practice?; (3) Were these stressors expected or unexpected? If you expected these stressors, why did you expect them?; (4) What did you do to deal with these stressors?; (5) How effective were you in dealing with these stressors?; (6) Do you foresee any stressors for the next practice/game?; (7) How satisfied are you with your performance in the game/practice?; and (8) Do you see a bright side to the stressors you are experiencing?

Participants were asked to make an audio-diary entry at their earliest convenience following each game and at least one practice per week, although they were told they could record more entries if they liked. Audio diaries were completed for the entire duration of the season. Tapes were collected bi-weekly by the researcher and identified with participant numbers, then transcribed and analysed as soon as possible (all audio-diary data were analysed before the post-season interview). By using audio-diaries to

collect data it was possible to capture the dynamic nature and pattern of stressors and coping efforts close to their actual occurrence (cf. Tennen et al., 2000).

Post-season athlete interview. The second interview was conducted two weeks after the end of the competitive season. Post-season interviews were completed in the same manner (in terms of location and timing) as the pre-season interviews. The questions in the post-season interview covered the following areas: (1) goals; (2) sport stressors; (3) life stressors; (4) coping; (5) photo elicitation (see below); (6) future temporal orientation; (7) social network; and (8) follow-up (Appendix 3.0: Athlete post-season interview). The questions during the second interview were designed to address the athletes' perceptions of stressors and coping over the course of the season, as well as to determine whether or not there were any changes in their coping efforts. The second interview also included questions about incidents reported in the athlete's audio-diary and served a member-check function (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These questions helped to establish that the researcher's analysis of the audio-diaries was an accurate representation of each participant's experience. Probe questions were used to explore areas of particular importance for each participant. The second interview was transcribed as soon as possible following completion of the interview.

Photo elicitation formed part of the post-season interview protocol whereby photographs were used in the research interview to stimulate recall of specific situations and experiences. The photographs were taken by the researcher during participant observation (reported below). Past studies examining athletic subcultures have been conducted using photo elicitation as part of a semi-structured interview technique (Curry & Strauss, 1986; Snyder, 1990; Snyder & Ammons, 1993). Harper (2002) suggested that

photographs and images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than words. Photographs can also serve to contextualize the setting for the researcher, add structure to note taking and aid participant observation (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

The researcher introduced photographs into the interview process as the final part of the post-season interview. Athletes were presented with photos of things or events which may have been perceived as stressors for them in basketball (e.g., a photograph of a scoreboard at the end of a close game), as well as things which may have helped them to cope with stress (e.g., a photograph of their teammates). The photos were not distributed or used for any purposes other than the interview process but were given to the athletes at the end of the study. Photographs were not published and are not presented in the results of the research in order to maintain participant anonymity.

Secondary Sources of Data

Pre-season coach interview. The interview for the head coach was conducted in a small meeting room at the school and the assistant coach was interviewed in her office, at the school. The following areas were covered in the first interview with the coaches: (1) goals; (2) sport stressors; (3) life stressors; (4) coping; (5) future temporal orientation; (6) social network; and (7) follow-up (see Appendix 4.0: Coach pre-season interview). The first interview with the coaches was transcribed and analysed as soon as possible following completion of the interview.

Coach audio diaries. Audio-diary prompts were modified for coaches. Each coach received a prompt covering the following areas: (1) Record date and time (was it a practice or game?); (2) What stressors did your athletes face in your most recent basketball game/practice?; (3) Were these stressors expected or unexpected for your

athletes? If they were expected, why do you think your athletes expected these stressors?; (4) What did they do to deal with these stressors?; (5) How effective were they in dealing with these stressors?; (6) Do you foresee any stressors for the next practice/game?; (7) How satisfied are you with your athletes' performance in the game/practice?; and (8) Do you see a bright side to the stressors your athletes are experiencing? Coaches were asked to make an audio-diary entry at their earliest convenience following each game and at least one practice per week, although they were told they could record more entries if they liked. Coaches' audio-diary tapes were collected bi-weekly by the researcher and identified with participant numbers, then transcribed and analysed as soon as possible. All audio-diary data were analysed before the second (member-checking) interview.

Post-season coach interview. The second coach interview covered the following areas: (1) goals; (2) sport stressors; (3) life stressors; (4) coping; (5) photo elicitation; (6) future temporal orientation; (7) social network; and (8) follow-up (see Appendix 5.0: Coach post-season interview). The second coach interview was transcribed and analysed as soon as possible following completion of the interview.

Participant observation. Participant observation was used in order to understand some of the contextual factors and specific words and meanings used by the team, which enables the researcher to 'make more sense' of the analysis (Wolcott, 1999). Observation was conducted throughout the season, and it was particularly important for establishing a deeper understanding of the context and meaning given that the researcher had not been a competitive athlete herself.

The first task during observation simply involved spending time in the setting in order to facilitate the development of rapport with the participants (Holloway, 1997). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) suggested that such rapport can emphasize the notion of *collaborating* with participants rather than doing research 'on' participants. Hence, the first few weeks of fieldwork were spent 'hanging out' with the team two to three times per week in order to build rapport and develop understanding (Andersen, 2000).

Initially then, the researcher was engaged in passive participation (Spradley, 1980) and did not interact with the participants to any great extent. Rather, she observed practices from the sidelines and sat in the stands for the first few games of the season. Some infrequent casual conversations occurred before and after practices with the coaches and athletes. As the season progressed, the researcher engaged in moderate participation, whereby the researcher "seeks to maintain a balance between being an insider and an outsider" (Spradley, 1980, p. 60). At this point the athletes were inviting the researcher to sit on the bench with them, striking up conversations in the halls before and after practice, and the athletes and coaches seemed comfortable having longer, more detailed conversations about the team and the nature of the sport with the researcher.

In order to facilitate the identification of salient issues throughout the research process, all observations (and notes on any informal conversations) were recorded in a fieldwork diary following observation sessions. Notes were made consisting of who was present at the practice or game, who was injured or absent, what drills the athletes engaged in, the overall 'tone' of the practice or game, as well as any conversations, comments, or interactions which occurred between the coaches and the athletes. Observations were initially recorded in short form or bullet points in a notebook and then

typed into an electronic file where more detail was added as soon as possible in order to facilitate the accurate recall of events. The use of a reflexive journal was useful in order to maintain what Patton (2002) described as 'empathic neutrality.' Patton (2002) defined empathic neutrality as the researcher's ability to maintain a stance which is neither too detached, nor too involved in the lives of the participants in the study, remaining "interested in the people being studied, but neutral about the content of what they reveal" (p. 569).

Data Analysis

Interview and audio-diary data were transcribed verbatim by a third party, and checked by the researcher to ensure accuracy. Data were managed using Microsoft Word and NVivo qualitative software. The athletes' audio diary data yielded 179 entries and 75 pages of data (about 47,547 words) in total, ranging from 3 to 33 entries per athlete over the course of the season (M = 13.77 entries, SD = 8.44). The audio diaries were collected over a period of 16 weeks (the duration of the team's season). The interview data yielded 320 pages of data (about 144,088 words) in total (M = 16 pages, SD = 4.34).

The data analysis proceeded in two phases. The first phase involved a group-level content analysis of the stressors reported by the athletes (and coaches) in their audio diaries and interviews. The purpose of this first phase of the analysis was to depict the social context of the team with a particular focus on the type and nature of the stressors the athletes experienced. Subsequently, the second phase of the analysis involved creating idiographic coping profiles for each of the athletes in order to explore the coping process over the course of the season. This strategy reflects moving from a nomothetic to an idiographic level of analysis.

Group level analysis of 'stressor context.' The first stage of analysis began with reading and re-reading each participant's interview transcripts and audio diaries to gain a sense of the material. The next step was an inductive content analysis, or open coding, whereby concepts and their properties and dimensions were identified (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Concepts were labelled according to themes (e.g., playing time) and through comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), data were examined for conceptual similarities and differences, and new categories were created for unique concepts. This process was repeated for each participant's interview transcripts and audio diaries. Axial coding was used to relate categories and subcategories, and to develop an overarching coding framework for the athletes' stressors and coping strategies. Hence, the analysis moved from description to interpretation in order to establish the nature and meaning of the stressors the athletes experienced in the context (Chamberlain, 2000). The data from both coaches were used to provide context to the atmosphere of the team and to further describe the environment within which the athletes performed. Providing contextual details of the case is also consistent with a case study approach (Patton, 2002).

For the coping data, a deductive analysis was employed by comparing the categories of coping strategies generated from the athletes' data to previously existing 'families of coping' (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). These families of coping represent a comprehensive and thorough review of coping strategies which are relevant to studying coping from a developmental perspective. This deductive approach was not taken with regards to the classification of athletes' reports of stressors as a comprehensive and thorough review of stressors relevant to the sport psychology literature does not currently exist.

Idiographic analysis. The second phase consisted of analyzing the audio diary and interview data for each participant in order to establish chronological idiographic profiles. Idiographic research is used to describe the intensive study of the individual (Dunn, 1994). These profiles illustrated what stressors were recurrent for each athlete over the course of the season and what coping strategies were used to deal with the stressors. One athlete's (i.e., P1's) audio diaries and post-season interview were examined and a time-ordered matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was constructed by compiling a chronological profile of all the reported stressors and associated coping attempts. This resulted in a matrix displaying all the stressors and coping strategies used over the course of the season by the athlete. The data were then reduced to examine in greater detail the changes in the athlete's coping over the course of the season. To this end, following Somerfield's (1997) suggestion for conducting qualitative analysis of stressors and coping, one 'key' stressor (the most frequently recurrent stressor) was chosen to examine the coping process exhibited by the individual athlete. Then, a written narrative was produced in order to describe the coping process throughout the season. This process was repeated for each athlete to establish 13 idiographic profiles of stressors and coping strategies (see Appendix 6.0. Summary of idiographic profiles and changes in coping).

Once the idiographic profiles of the athletes' coping were established, the analysis proceeded to examine any similarities in coping across cases. Athletes were grouped according to the changes in coping exhibited over the course of the season (or lack thereof). This reflects nomothetic logic in terms of establishing whether "the within-person relations generalize across persons" (Tennen & Affleck, 1996, p. 152), namely, to

confirm the applicability of certain individual principles to an understanding of the coping process.

Methodological Rigour

Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) argued that terms such as validity and reliability remain appropriate concepts for attaining methodological rigour in qualitative research. They also argued that researchers must incorporate verification strategies within the research process (e.g., selecting an appropriate sample, collecting and analyzing data concurrently, and triangulation of data sources), rather than relying entirely on post-hoc evaluation strategies (e.g., member-checking and peer debriefing). Heeding this advice, the present study used verification procedures during the research process as well as a post-hoc evaluation technique to demonstrate the methodological rigour of the research.

In the case of the current research, the members of a senior girls' basketball team were sampled in order to examine the stress and coping process of female adolescent athletes participating in competitive sport where potential stressors were likely to recur over the course of a season. Data were analyzed from the outset of the study in order to continually establish "what is known and what one needs to know" (Morse et al., 2002, p. 12). Triangulation of data sources was also sought by interviewing and collecting secondary data via audio-diaries and interviews. Also, data provided by coaches helped to triangulate the athletes' accounts of games and practices during the season.

In terms of post-hoc strategies, the post-season interview (while producing 'new' data) also served a member-checking function for the analyses performed on the pre-season and audio-diary data. Participants were presented with the initial data analysis

(idiographic profiles of their pre-season interview and their audio-diary data) and were asked to verify (or refute) that their views were represented accurately, identify problematic areas, develop new ideas, and provide ideas for further elaboration (Patton, 2002; Sparkes, 1998). Morse et al. (2002) warned against reliance on using member checks as a method of ensuring validity (because individuals may be unable to recognize themselves or their experiences in study results which are decontextualized and abstracted from the participants). However, in the present study the member checking protocol was just a single technique, used in combination with other techniques, which provided participants with an opportunity to comment on the researcher's analysis. Finally, continual peer debriefing (Sparkes, 1992) was conducted with the researcher's advisory to monitor possible researcher subjectivity and to offer different perspectives on the interpretation of participants' responses.

Ethical Considerations

A specific ethical issue which arose early in this study was the athletes' desire to seek sport psychology assistance with their performance issues and sport stressors. During the initial meeting where the present study was being explained to the participants, one athlete asked "If we want to talk to you or seek help about our stressors, can we do that?" From an ethical perspective there may have been a responsibility for the researcher to help the athletes. However, from a research perspective this type of assistance would have almost certainly impacted the results. In response to this issue the researcher informed the participants that she was unable to offer any sport psychology assistance to the team during the period of the study. The researcher also had to refrain

from offering any type of advice to the athletes throughout the study and maintain empathic neutrality (Patton, 2002) for the duration of the study.

CHAPTER 4a:

RESULTS I

The results are presented in three sections: (a) group level analysis of stressors; an 'atmosphere of criticism,' (b) group level analysis of coping strategies, and (c) idiographic profiles of coping over the season. Following traditional case study methodology (Stake, 1995) the group level analysis of stressors is presented to establish the boundaries of the case and describe the patterns of interaction that occurred over the season. The second section (group level analysis of coping) provides an overview and definitions of the reported coping strategies. Combined, the group level analyses of stressors and coping strategies provide the foundation for the core findings of this study; the idiographic coping profiles over the season. These idiographic profiles are intended to depict the dynamic person-environment interactions at the heart of the coping process.

Group Level Analysis of Stressors: A 'Climate for Stress'

Analysis revealed that the team context could be described as a 'climate for stress.' Central to this atmosphere were the coaches' behaviours, which subsequently appeared to influence the nature of the stressors reported by the athletes. Indeed, stressors related to team dynamics, playing time, and performance expectations all stemmed from the coaches' behaviours. On the other hand, broader life and physical stressors were reported, and these were unrelated to the coaches' behaviours. That is, these stressors occurred in the wider context of the athletes' sport experience. Hence, the interpretation forwarded is that the coach was central in creating a climate for stress that pervaded the athletes' reported stressors. A visual display of how these stressors appeared to 'hold together' is provided in Figure 4.

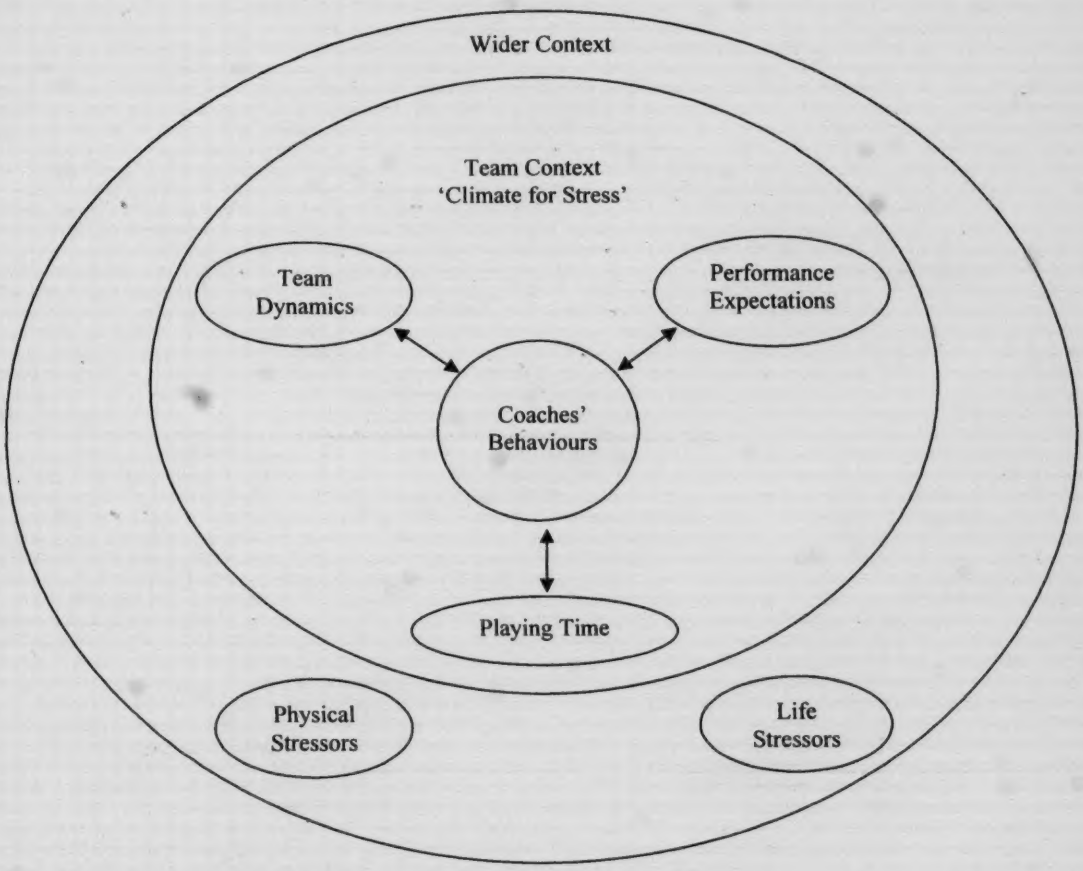

Figure 4. Visual display of stressors depicting the team context.

To further contextualize this climate for stress, examples of the reported stressors have been provided in the following section. Overall, analysis revealed six categories and 16 subcategories of stressors. The categories and their subcategories are described in Table 1, along with a single example of raw data to exemplify the athletes' responses. Although the categories and sub-categories have been broken down for the purposes of this group level presentation, it should be noted that athletes sometimes reported these stressors concurrently. For example, the stressor *role confusion* was reported along with *poor coach communication* or *interpersonal stressors*. Similarly, athletes concurrently

described worries about *playing time* and *role confusion* along with concerns about *personal performance*. For example, P11 reported in an audio dairy that:

> … [coach] set out the starting line-up today … I didn't expect to be on it, but I wasn't, and [the team] was just very divided today, you could feel it … I just was stressed about how I'm not one of the top players and it got to my head, and I started playing really bad. (P11, November 29, post-practice).

Another example was reported by P6, who said that she was concurrently experiencing concerns about life stressors as well as her personal performance. She said after a practice that:

> Today was kind of a long day. I had math [exam] so I was pretty tired after [that]. So um, at first practice wasn't really good. I was just yeah, really tired and couldn't play very well … I guess these were expected because it was such a long day and I knew it would be. (January 22, post-practice).

These examples show that merely listing discrete stressors may not accurately reflect athletes' actual experiences in sport. Rather, it appears that often more than one stressor was experienced at a given time or following a given performance.

Table 1. Categories of stressors with subcategories and rules of inclusion.

Category	Sub-Category	# of Athletes Reporting	Rule of Inclusion	Example Quote
Coach Behaviours	Poor Coach Communication	13	Stressors related to a lack of communication between coaches and players.	I just felt like, there wasn't enough feedback this year, and like, reasons for why decisions were made and stuff like that … what was going on was really unclear, and that's my main problem. The communication was not really clear. (P11, post-season interview).
	Coach Criticism	11	Referred to an athlete's reports of criticism received from the coaches.	Today in practice the stressors that I faced were always getting blamed for doing things wrong. Well, yeah, doing things wrong and just messing up and always having the coach yell at me. (P8, December 13, post-practice).
Team Dynamics	Interpersonal Conflict	13	Stressors related to conflict on the team between athletes.	I feel like [teammate] is being really selfish right now … she sits there and she mocks people, and she mocks them when they're on the court, and she laughs when she's on the bench, and she's not cheering and she's not helping, she's not supporting her teammates. I feel like every time I go on the court, I feel like I'm being judged. (P10, January 11, post-game).
	Role Confusion	8	An athlete's perceptions that her role on the team was not clearly defined, or that she did not feel that she was a valued member of the team	You always want to feel like you're a valued member of the team, and throughout the season I didn't feel like that … So I was lost and I didn't know, I didn't feel like there was a spot for me when I was on the floor. (P12, post-season interview).
Performance Expectations	Personal Performance Expectations	10	Referred to an athlete's concerns that her own performance was not adequate.	I don't know, it kinda made me angry like, not angry but I felt like I could do better cause I really didn't want to start, and I think I can perform better than I actually do. (P3, January 11, post-practice).
	Social evaluation of performance	8	Perceived pressure to perform during games. Pressure to perform could be perceived as originating from others (coaches, teammates, parents) or from the athlete herself.	I feel like [the pressure is] from myself, and then I feel like [coach] expects better … in the first half we'll play so bad … and then I start playing halfway throughout the second, and [she'll give] plays for me, and if I miss it [the shot] she'll get really mad … And like, they'd always depend on me a lot, so it was [a lot of] stress. If I missed it, I felt so bad. (P7, post-season interview).

Table 1. Categories of stressors with subcategories and rules of inclusion. (continued)

Category	Sub-Category	# of Athletes Reporting	Rule of Inclusion	Example Quote
Performance Expectations (continued)	Lack of self-confidence	6	Feelings of self-doubt in regards to an athlete's performance or ability.	I have everything physical, it's just everything that's between the ears now, you know? It's all mental … But like, I don't know how to get there for every game and that's what everyone keeps telling me, the only thing I lack is confidence, that's it. (P5, December 13, post-practice).
	Team Performance	7	Stressors related to an athlete's perception that the team was not performing well or was not working well together on the court.	It was a really frustrating game because it felt like there was like five people who really wanted to win, um, the rest of the people just had bad attitudes and were sitting on the bench, mocking players, being rude, not taking the game seriously, and not, and weren't true team players … And it's just really frustrating. (P13, January 11, post-game).
	Opponent	8	When an athlete perceived losing or the opponent as a stressor in her most recent game or in an upcoming practice or game.	We're coming up with like against some really good teams so it's going to be really stressful, like we'll probably lose a lot. Like, I'll lose a lot of games and in the beginning of the season, so that's going to be really, really stressful, um, and yeah it's just going to be a lot of hard work. (P9, pre-season interview).
	Practice Demands	7	Referred to stressors such as a hard practice or learning new concepts in practice.	We learned a lot of new stuff lately, which has been kind of stressful because we don't learn, we don't know some things really well and it's hard to do it properly. And the coaches want to see results and they want to see us do stuff, and they get frustrated when we don't do things properly, which really sucks. (P2, January 4, post-practice).
Playing Time	General Playing Time	12	An athlete's concerns about lack of playing time or being benched during a game.	Today was really stressful because once again I didn't really get to play much and when I do go in it's not like I screw up anything big. Like I might make one little mistake but then I'll get taken off, so it'll last for like thirty seconds or a minute and then someone else on our team will make the same mistake over and over and she won't even like take them out or say anything about it. And that was really stressful. (P4, February 13, post-game).
	Pity Time	3	Concerns about playing for only a few minutes at the end of a game, usually when the outcome was guaranteed.	I wouldn't go on until we were up by like thirty or forty in a game and or down thirty. And she knew we were going to lose in like the last five minutes so I basically got pity time. (P8, post-season interview).

Table 1. Categories of stressors with subcategories and rules of inclusion. (continued)

Category	Sub-Category	# of Athletes Reporting	Rule of Inclusion	Example Quote
Physical Stressors	Poor Health	6	Instances when an athlete reported stressor of poor health which negatively impacted her performance.	I think everyone was kind of just tired and everyone's pretty sick actually too, and um, we weren't really putting in a lot of effort into out drills and it was really showing. (P6, December 27, post-practice).
	Injury	4	Injury which prevented an athlete from playing or caused her to perform below her usual capacity.	I really wanted to play and I don't know, I felt really good that practice, and everyone looked like they were having fun and I just got emotional, I really wanted to, really really wanted to play. (P7, November 29, post-practice).
Life Stressors	Family/ Relationships	9	Stressors outside the context of sport related to family, friendships, or relationships.	Um, stressful situation right now is um, I have a friend right now who is not doing very well … she's kind of like thought about suicide and other stuff like that which is really sad and I don't really like that. And I have to check up on her everyday and talk to her all night and stuff so … that's pretty stressful right now. (P2, pre-season interview).
	School/Work	8	Stressors outside the context of sport related to school or work demands.	I find Math extremely stressful right now … I'm doing so bad but I know in my mind I'm just going to take this again next year. So I haven't been doing my homework and stuff cause in my mind I'm already doing it next year. (P1, post-season interview).

The frequencies by which stressors were cited provide an additional perspective to the themes listed. Within qualitative studies the simple frequency of a response is not necessarily indicative of its relative importance to an athlete (Krane, Greenleaf, & Snow, 1997). That said, given that audio-diaries were used in conjunction with interviews, the frequencies of reports over a season gives some insight into the *recurrence* of certain stressors over the season. Recurrent stressors likely reflect concerns that were salient to the athletes. For example, all the players on the team reported poor coach communication as a stressor during the season in their audio diaries. Similarly, 11 athletes reported coach criticism as a stressor either in their audio diary entries or in their post-season interviews. These findings suggest that the communication strategies used by the coach were salient stressors for the majority of the players over the season.

Coach Behaviours

The coaches' behaviours over the course of the season were central to the climate for stress within the team context. Coach behaviours included stressors reported by the athletes related to *poor coach communication* and *coach criticism*.

Poor coach communication. All the athletes on the team reported a lack of communication with the head coach as a stressor during the season in their audio diaries. During a mid-season audio diary entry, even though the team had a winning record, P10 said:

> I just feel stressed because [coach] didn't even tell us anything … She didn't tell us why we were playing, why would she play us the entire game, like, is she playing us because she's resting them [other players]? Is she playing us because we're not going to get anymore playing time for

> the rest of the season because we're starting to head into like, our tougher, like, games and stuff? Or, why? … She just doesn't tell us. (January 9, post-game).

P1 also reported that poor coach communication was a stressor for her. She said in her audio diary of February 1 that, "I don't think anyone really understands [coach]. And I think that's why liké our team, our team always has so much problems" (post-game).

Coach criticism. Coach criticism included perceived criticism received from either the head coach or the assistant coach. Eleven athletes reported coach criticism as a stressor either in their audio diary entries or in their post-season interviews. Anticipating that coach criticism would be a stressor for her, P8 said in her pre-season interview that:

> I think that the coaching is going to be really stressful. Cause I know I've heard stories from past seasons about how she's really strict and, but I do like her as a coach, but it, like her yelling, that's going to be stressful. I know that for sure.

During the season, P11 reported in an audio diary entry that: "We had a practice. Um, stressors, um, [coach] kinda yelled at me today in practice and it was kinda scary" (January 8, post-practice). Similarly, P6 reported that:

> When the coach is yelling, I'm not a huge fan for when people are screaming at you, getting all mad. Some people like it; it gets them more into it, but I'd rather that people just talk, like, 'you can't let that happen,' instead of being like, 'you can't do that! What are you thinking!' (P6, post-season interview).

Stressors related to coach criticism and poor coach communication were often reported concurrently by the athletes and were central to the climate for stress created within the team context, contributing to further stressors such as role confusion and personal performance. In her post-season interview, P12 reported that:

> I'm intimidated by [coach] a lot … she's scary. I don't know, I'm afraid to approach her and um, that's not all her fault I guess, like just that's my own like perceptions of her I guess … I didn't want to bother her with like … I thought that my problem wasn't significant enough to talk to her about it and I don't, that was probably the wrong way to go about it. I ended up struggling [with my performance] because of it, and she ended up not knowing where I stood on a lot of things. So it was just, it could have been handled better by both of us I think.

The head coach acknowledged that her behaviours would be stressful for the athletes over the course of the season. She reported at the beginning of the season that she maintained high standards for the athletes and that:

> I'm tough, so I think I'll be a lot of their stressors … Lots of the [junior team athletes] are flat out scared of me at the school. Um, most of the girls [who] come into my program are scared to play for me. (Pre-season interview).

In regards to the criticism provided to the athletes, the head coach went on to say: "I'm the queen of 'I will say harsh things to get results' with certain players" (pre-season interview). The assistant coach also acknowledged the role of coaching behaviours in the context of the team. She said in her pre-season interview that:

> I think it's huge how [athletes] will interpret something that we say … whether it be our words or non-verbal, [but] that can be a huge impact on [them]. Yet I might not see it as a big deal. Like okay, I'm pissed off, and I'm rubbing my head or I'm throwing my arms up, or I'm saying 'you guys are playing pathetic.' They might hear that I just called them pathetic, you know? So I think it's [the] perception [of] the person who is receiving it.

Team Dynamics

Other stressors reflected issues relating to the broader social context of the team. For example, all of the athletes reported examples of *interpersonal conflict* and eight athletes reported stressors related to *role confusion.* The notion of role confusion appeared to emanate from some of the decisions made by the coach.

Interpersonal conflict. This referred to conflicts on the team between athletes. All the athletes reported instances of conflict between teammates as a stressor. For P8, conflict with another teammate was a stressor throughout the season. She said in an audio diary entry:

> I'm starting to get bullied by [teammate] … And um, [teammate] being a bitch is also expected because that's what she is. She's a bitch and she has no manners. She hates everyone who wasn't raised like her or anyone that doesn't give [in to] her way. (January 24, post-practice).

Another form of interpersonal stressors was reported by P10 in a mid-season audio diary entry. She said:

> I feel like [teammate] is being really selfish right now … and she sits there and she mocks people, and she mocks them when they're on the court, and she laughs when she's on the bench, and she's not cheering and she's not helping, she's not supporting her teammates. I feel like every time I go on the court, I feel like I'm being judged. I feel like I'm being mocked. (January 11, post-game).

Role confusion. Role confusion referred to athletes' perceptions that their role on the team was not clearly defined by the coach, or they did not feel that they were a valued member of the team. Eight athletes reported this stressor at some point during the season. In one particularly emotional audio diary entry following a loss, P11 reported that (as though addressing the coach):

> I'm just going to let it out. I don't swear very often, but [coach] makes me swear and I don't cry very often, and she makes me cry (sound of crying on tape). OK. I know that I'm not going to play in close games. But do not say at the beginning of a game that 'I'm going to get everyone in' or that 'everyone has to give me their five minutes.' So am I just not a part of the team anymore? Is that it? '*Everyone*'s going to get in? *Everyone* did a good job?' [sarcastically, while sobbing, italics added]. It's, it's not fair. (January 11, post-game).

It could be that the stressors related to team dynamics were related to the coach's lack of clarity about the athletes' roles on the team. In fact, P9 said during her post-season interview that:

> No one knew their role. So I don't think it was necessary [to have so much conflict], I think a lot of the reason why there was conflict was because of coaching error, because all those girls are best friends. And it's like, none of this would have happened if we just would have had our roles picked.

Another instance of interpersonal conflict as a result of the coach's behaviours concerned an athlete's return to the team from being injured which caused some concern for other athletes on the team. The head coach reflected on the situation in her audio diary and said:

> She came back for the first time, and I think the other [players] were really rattled by that. She outplayed everyone on the team, as a grade ten and someone who hasn't practiced all year, I think that kinda shook the foundation of our team. So I think that was a little bit unexpected for the girls. I know [name] was crying after the game. (December 21, post-game).

This conflict also affected the returning player, who said that:

> … I felt like [they] were kind of jealous of me in a way, especially [name], in a way, cause … a drill wouldn't be going on, but she'd still try to like, compete against me … it just made me so mad and … she'd be like, pushing me on defence … they're like, being so aggressive. Yeah, like, you're supposed to do stuff on defence, but they were just being so like, uncalled for. (P7, post-season interview).

Performance Expectations

Performance expectations included *personal performance expectations, social evaluation of performance, lack of self-confidence, team performance, opponent,* and *practice demands.* Many of these stressors appeared to be related to the coaches' expectations of the athletes. For instance, the assistant coach reported that she anticipated the athletes might report stressors related to performance expectations as a result of poor coach communication and coach behaviours. In her pre-season interview she said:

> I think athletes [will] find it very stressful if we're not consistent in our expectations. If coaches aren't consistent in what it is that we're doing, [then] that can be confusing, especially if we don't explain it … that can be a stressor.

Perhaps related to the 'atmosphere of criticism' created by the coach, it was not surprising that athletes' performance expectations accounted for 52% of all reported stressors across both interviews and all audio diary entries.

Personal performance expectations. Personal performance stressors were reported by 10 athletes and related to an athlete's concerns that her own performance was not adequate. For example, in one audio diary entry, P9 reported that:

> I don't know, it kinda made me angry like, not angry but I felt like I could do better cause I really didn't want to start, and I think I can perform better than I actually do. (January 11, post-practice).

P10 reported in an early season audio diary entry:

> I feel like I'm not good enough and I feel like, I'm in grade 12 and I'm a senior on this team and I need to be a leader and I always have, like, I have all these high expectations of myself but I don't feel like my team

> has them of me. And I feel like I'm just always letting them down, like I'm never achieving what I want to achieve. (P10, December 6, post-game).

Similarly, P4 thought that she was not living up to her own expectations and the expectations of the team. As a result, she said, "I have a lot of guilt right now about stuff, about my playing and I really feel, like, I really let down the team" (P2, December 15, post-game).

The coaches also reported instances where they observed the athletes to be concerned about personal performance. The assistant coach said in her audio diary of January 7 that:

> A couple of the girls, [name] in particular, was in tears before the practice. She was just stressed about her performance at the last game. She didn't feel that she was dominating. She didn't feel she was scoring enough … I think she was just feeling really sort of overwhelmed … frustrated that she's not playing well and just a little bit lost. (Post-practice).

Social evaluation of performance. This stressor related to the athletes' concerns about the social evaluation of their performances. It was reported by eight athletes during the season. P12 recorded an early season audio diary entry where the team had faced rivals in a tournament game and said:

> Today in the game I faced the stressor of playing in our packed school gym at our home tournament against girls that I've been playing against for six years so we're kind of rivals. Um, the stressor was sort of expected, um, I, we knew we were going to be playing that, this team since

> yesterday, but I wasn't expecting to be as nervous as I was. (P12, December 8, post-game).

Social evaluation of performance was also reported as originating from the coaches and the atmosphere created by the coaches' behaviours. P6 reported in her post-season interview that "it seemed as if we didn't [meet] her expectations [and] you always were trying to prove yourself, that you wanted to go on." P13 also reported in her post-season interview that:

> [Coach] expects so much … she expects so much out of you and especially when you're a starter, if you don't come out and you don't play, you know that she's pissed off at you. And it's not that she's pissed off at you [as a person], she's pissed off at the way you played, but it comes off that way … I respect her so much but there's so much stress with that and it sucks. (Post-season interview).

Lack of confidence. This sub-category included feelings of doubt in regards to the athlete's performance or ability in games or practices. Concerns about lack of confidence were reported by six athletes during the season. In her audio diary entry of December 13, P5 said:

> I guess, there's a little bit of stress right now, I don't, yeah, I guess it's stress. Cause like, I don't know, like, like the guys' coach or whatever, like, keeps talking to me right, cause like, I go to shoot every morning and he's, keeps telling me you know, like, I have everything physical, it's just everything that's between the ears now you know, it's all mental. And like, I haven't, um, how do I say like, like, I've been to the place where

> it's like, you don't even think, it's unconscious, right? Like, you just cash it, you know, I've been there. But like, I don't, I'm not sure how to get there, you know like I just get there sometimes. But like, I don't know how to get there for like every game and that's what everyone keeps telling me, the only thing I lack is confidence, that's it. (December 13, post-practice).

Team performance expectations. Team performance stressors related to an athlete's concerns that the team was performing below her expectations. Seven athletes reported this stressor during the season. This was particularly evident among athletes who expressed their desire to perform at a high level in their sport or to make it to the city championships. P10 said in an early audio diary entry that:

> I was just expecting to go out there and just kill them … and show them how much better [we are] and just completely step all over them, but we ended up just playing f•••ing horrible … We just didn't play like how we always play. We sunk to their level, and that was not exactly what I expected. (December 6, post-game).

Similarly, after losing a game P13 said:

> It was a really frustrating game because it felt like there was like five people who really wanted to win, um, the rest of the people just had bad attitudes … And it just made me really frustrated that, like a team should be a team, not individuals, like, there's not one all-star, we're a team. There's not 13 of us, there's one of us. And it's just really frustrating. (January 11, post-game).

The head coach reported that the team did not perform to her expectations in an early-season game. She said in her audio diary that:

> The team played like crap. No effort, no defence. Totally focused on the outcome not on the process, I repeatedly remind them about effort and defence ah, they played a lot of their former teammates from junior high, so it was just, totally they weren't focused at all … I'm not satisfied at all with their game today. Um, I told them that it was an embarrassment to me as a coach and to them as players. We didn't play to our ability and it's a bad reflection on our program when they aren't focused and it looks like they haven't been practicing and they don't have a skill set … So the girls got the warning and they know if we play like this in our tournament we will not be successful. (December 6, post-game).

Opponent. This included stressors such as losing a game or facing a difficult or tough opponent. Concerns about opponents were reported by eight athletes during the season. One grade 12 player predicted in her pre-season interview that the team's competition would be tough because:

> … we're coming up with like against some really good teams so it's going to be really stressful, like we'll probably lose a lot. Like I'll lose a lot of games and in the beginning of the season, so that's going to be really, really stressful, um, and yeah it's just going to be a lot of hard work. (P9, pre-season interview).

Later in the season, P4 reported similar stressors due to the prospect of playing a tough team in a game which would affect the team's chance of making the city championships:

> … For like the past week our coach has been talking about how this team is going to be really big and tough to beat so I was just really stressed out before the game and really getting nervous about it, and just scared about what it was going to be like. And kind of nervous to play and stressed out about that. (P4, February 6, post-game).

Practice demands. This referred to stressors related to performance demands in practice, such as a difficult practice or learning new concepts in practice. These stressors were reported by seven athletes in their audio diary data, but none of these athletes reported practice stressors in their post-season interview. During the season, P5 reported that learning new concepts in practices was a stressor which was overwhelming at times because:

> There's so much and like, where to go and this happens or this person penetrates you drift up here, and you're on defence and you have to go here, and you have to help up high and then go back low and watch ball in corner … it's just you know, 'holy, give me a break.' (P5, December 13, post-practice).

The coaches were also aware of practices and the stressors the athletes were facing. On the same day that P5 recorded her concerns about practice, the assistant coach said:

> I'm impressed with how the girls have handled the practices and ah, just some of the challenges that each of them are dealing with. We also had a very cerebral practice … it was very ah, different than what we've done before in that the girls had to really mentally focus for about an hour and a

> half. We really slowed down the practice and went through some systems and so for them, that was a, that was a change, and I think for some of the kids who have never, you know, competed at this level, I think it had to be a challenge for them … I know even myself, at the end of practice, I was mentally stretched. So I'm sure they were feeling it too. (December 13, post-practice).

Playing Time

When coding playing time as a stressor, two subcategories of stressors were created: *general playing time* and *'pity' time.*

General playing time. This subcategory included reports by athletes wherein they were generally displeased with the amount of playing time they were receiving or about being benched during a game. This stressor was reported by 12 athletes at some point during the season. For example, P4 reported after a win:

> Today was really stressful because once again I didn't really get to play much and when I do go in it's not like I screwed up anything big. Like I might make one little mistake but then I'll get taken off, so it'll last for like thirty seconds or a minute and then someone else on our team will make the same mistake over and over and she won't even like take them out or say anything about it. And that was really stressful. (February 13, post-game).

The assistant coach noted in an audio diary that:

> I'm not sure if playing time is an issue with some of the athletes … they just seem to come to practice and the games and [seem to be] appreciative

> of the minutes that they're getting. So I'm not sure but I sense that there is that issue [of playing time]. And then also, once we play everybody that obviously effects some of the starter's minutes so I'm not sure how they're reacting to that. I have a sense sort of in my gut that ah, there's some underlying stressor there for some of the girls that, tend to get more minutes but aren't. And now we're playing everybody so, ah the, you know seventh to twelfth players [are] a little bit happier that they're seeing floor team. But that affects ah, the dynamics of our starters. (February 10, post-game).

This example reflected how the stressor of general playing time was experienced in combination with role confusion for the athletes, from the perspective of the coaches.

Pity time. The second subcategory of stressors related to playing time was what the athletes termed as 'pity time,' which was a situation where the athlete played for only a few minutes at the end of a game, usually when the outcome was guaranteed. Three athletes reported concerns about pity time during the season. Towards the end of the season, P4 said:

> I got played like a minute in the first half and thirty seconds of pity time at the very end of the second half and that was just really stressful cause I still have no frickin idea what the hell I did wrong in the first place to be where I am. (February 20, post-game).

In her post-season interview, P8 said:

> I wouldn't go on until we were up by like thirty or forty in a game and or down thirty. And she knew we were going to lose in like the last five

> minutes so I basically got pity time … And I'm just like, 'well there's no point in me being here,' she [coach] just wants to do it to make herself feel better about not playing me. (P8, post-season interview).

The coaches did not speak directly to the issue of pity time, and in fact the head coach said in her final audio diary entry that: "I hope that [the athletes] feel appreciated and I hope that I emphasize that no matter how much time [they played] it's [not about that]; everybody contributes to a team" (March 18, post-game). Although the coaches seemed to be aware that playing time was a stressor for the athletes, they did not seem to grasp the extent to which the athletes were concerned with the issue of pity time.

Physical Stressors

The category of *physical stressors* included stressors reported by the athletes which were directly related *poor health* or *injury*.

Poor health. This included athletes' reports of stress due to their health which negatively impacted their performance. Six athletes reported concerns about poor health in their audio diary data. P6 reported that over the Christmas break, the team was still practicing regularly despite nearly everyone on the team feeling sick or tired, which resulted in a poor performance in practices: "I think everyone was kind of just tired and everyone's pretty sick actually too, and um, we weren't really putting in a lot of effort into out drills and it was really showing" (December 27, post-practice).

Injury. Stressors which related to injury included the athletes' pain or their inability to practice and play with the team. This included reports by athletes who felt they were underperforming as a result of their injury. Four athletes reported concerns

about being injured during the season. For example, one athlete who sustained an injury late in the season said:

> Okay so, um Saturday was my first practice back and the stressor for that practice was um, I wasn't playing as well as I had been right before my injury or even for the rest of before I was injured at all in the season because I was still not completely well and my ankle was still hurt and not very flexible. Um, I guess the stressor was expected just because I knew that I wouldn't be able to come back 100% right away. (P12, February 17, post-practice).

Life Stressors

Life stressors consisted of any reported stressors outside the context of sport. These could include family or relationship stressors, school stressors, or work stressors. All the athletes reported life stressors in their post-season interviews, however only five athletes reported life stressors in their audio diary entries.

Family/Relationships. Family and relationship stressors were reported by nine athletes during the season. These concerns were typically 'out of the ordinary' stressors for the athletes. For example, P2 said:

> Um, stressful situation right now is um, I have a friend right now who is not doing very well … it's really stressful for her and she's a really like bright person so I hate to see that happen. She's a pretty good friend so that's pretty stressful for me. Cause she's kind of like thought about suicide and other stuff like that which is really sad and I don't really like that. And I have to check up on her everyday and talk to her all night and

> stuff so as long as she's being pretty good so that's pretty stressful right now ... My family kind of stresses me out too. (Pre-season interview).

Some athletes reported that the stressors they experienced outside of sport often interfered with their sport performance. For example, P10 said that:

> We won the game by 40 points, but I like, am still feeling stressed about this whole like situation over my boyfriend and shit, and, even though that shouldn't be an excuse, whatever, I, like, I played absolutely horrible today, I didn't score one basket and like, it was easy, I should have been able to score like, tons of baskets, I had a really hard time scoring today. (P10, January 5, post-game).

School/Work. School and work stressors were reported by eight athletes during the season, however only five athletes predicted them in their pre-season interview. These stressors often related to exams or classes which were difficult for the athletes, or the time management necessary to balance school and work with basketball. In her post-season interview, P13 said:

> On road trips, I'm like, 'okay I need to study today, like I *need* to' [italics added]. And then I would forget to [study] and then I would get stressed out over it and then in the beginning I'd be like, 'oh f***, I forgot to study.'

Group Level Analysis of Coping

Analysis of the athletes' interviews and audio diaries resulted in the creation of seven categories of coping strategies with 15 subcategories. The main categories of coping strategies were *problem solving, support seeking, accommodation, submission,*

escape, information seeking, and *self-reliance*. These categories were generated from participants' data and compared to previously existing 'families of coping' (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007), which were used to guide the analysis of coping strategies in the present study. The categories and their subcategories are described in Table 2, along with a single example of raw data to exemplify the athletes' responses.

Extensive descriptions of the coping strategies have not been provided here because they are reported in more detail in the idiographic coping profiles. However, it should be noted that (as with the stressors) athletes sometimes reported coping strategies concurrently. For example, following a game in which she did not play, P2 reported in an audio diary that:

> The thing is though … I had a lot of fun on the bench and I cheered for my team and I encouraged them and I think that, like … I want to think that I did help the team, being on the bench and cheering for people when I saw people down and when I saw them beat up on themselves. I didn't think about it [not playing] and I was like whatever, I have to put it out of my mind and I cheered on my team and I think I did good today. (P2, December 16, post-game).

In this example, the athlete used distraction (cheering while on bench) as well as cognitive restructuring (think that she helped the team) to cope with her stressor of not playing. The combined use of coping strategies are described in greater detail in the next section which contains the idiographic profiles of the athletes' coping over the course of the season.

Table 2. Categories and sub-categories of coping strategies and rules of inclusion.

Category	Sub-Category	# of Athletes Reporting	Rule of Inclusion	Example Quote
Problem Solving	Instrumental Action	9	Referred to direct action taken by the athlete to cope with stressors. Included actions such as following the coach's directions, or coming in early for extra shooting practice or increasing effort during stressful games or practices.	I just tried to do what the coach was asking me to do and execute the plays that she wanted us to do. Uh, I think I got more effective at dealing with the stressor, in the first half … things weren't going as well as I wanted them to do, uh, wanted them to, but the more I worked at what the coach was saying and telling me to do, the better things started to go. (P12, December 8, post-game).
	Planning/Strategizing	12	Athlete's attempt to cope with a stressor by developing a plan of action to deal with it.	Tonight, though, [I] came straight here and just wrote down all the plays and stuff. (P5, December 13, post-practice).
Support-Seeking	Social Referencing	12	Seeking social support from teammates, family members, or friends in order to foster a sense of alliance or comfort from others experiencing similar stressors	The friendships that we made on the team and … just, being on the team, for me, is always like being on a family it's just like, all the girls are like sisters. Just spending time with each other every day … and like, just helping each other get through it. (P10, post-season interview).
	Delegation	11	Expressing thoughts or feelings about a stressor without seeking advice or solutions to solve the problem. Delegation included strategies such as venting, complaining, and whining.	Um, well usually I just like vent in the car and I like vent to my mom or my brother or my boyfriend and I just like, 'Nahhh this happened and I played like crap,' and just like, let it all out. (P10, post-season interview).

Table 2. Categories of coping strategies with subcategories and rules of inclusion. (continued)

Category	Sub-Category	# of Athletes Reporting	Rule of Inclusion	Example Quote
Accommodation	Cognitive Restructuring	13	Involved attempts made by the athlete to re-frame or restructure their perception of the stressor they were facing in order to cope with it. Included seeing the positive in a negative situation.	If someone got mad, [if coach] got mad at me, yelling at me, I would take that and just put it into a positive thing and use it to be better. (P7, post-season interview).
	Acceptance	9	Referred to the athlete's acceptance of or coming to terms with the stressor she was facing.	I got my head around the fact that I probably wasn't going to get into a lot of games … If I sat there and I thought about 'oh I don't get to play,' then I was just going to be kind of a downer on the bench and I don't want to be that. (P11, post-season interview).
	Distraction	7	Mental or behavioural efforts by the athlete to distract herself from the stressor by engaging in another activity.	I don't know why but, I think just at in our warm up, I was just more relaxed and [teammate] and I were kind of goofing around a bit, just having some alley-oops and stuff. And I think that just really calmed me down and I was having like fun and everything. (P6, February 27, post-game).
Submission	Rumination	8	Reports of constantly thinking about or reflecting on the stressor they were facing. Included instances of intrusive thoughts about the stressor.	I was reliving like all the mistakes that I had made … what I was trying to do was think about the stuff that I shouldn't be doing and then turn it into something that I should be doing. But I think I just ended up thinking about all the bad stuff. (P12, post-season interview).
	Helplessness	5	Expressions of confusion or feelings of despair by the athlete. Included desire to quit the team.	It just felt like everything was falling apart. Like at that point we were just like, 'our season's over.' Like I honestly did not want to play anymore after that point. (P10, post-season interview).

Table 2. Categories of coping strategies with subcategories and rules of inclusion. (continued)

Category	Sub-Category	# of Athletes Reporting	Rule of Inclusion	Example Quote
Escape	Behavioural Avoidance	4	Coping efforts whereby the athlete attempted to physically remove herself from a stressful situation or avoid it altogether.	I kind of just didn't, or tried not to talk to [the coach] unless I needed to or if she talked to me first. (P8, post-season interview).
	Mental Withdrawal	7	Coping attempts whereby the athlete tried not to think about a stressor or deliberately tried to ignore a stressor.	To deal with my stress today, basically I just did what I always do. I shut [the coach] out and just tried to do my own thing. (P9, February 13, post-game).
Information-Seeking	Asking Others	10	Referred to coping strategies which the athlete used in order to gain information from teammates, coaches, friends or family members about the stressor they were facing.	My favourite thing about our coaches is that they are so upfront with everything and if you're having a bad day, they're telling, like, they'll tell you straight that you're having a bad day, which I really liked, and when I did something wrong, they'd tell me … they wouldn't be like, 'well, it's good but you can do better,' they'd be like 'this is what you need to be doing instead of what you're doing,' so I think that helped me a lot. (P2, post-season interview).
	Observation	2	Information-seeking strategy whereby the athlete attempted to learn about the stressor or ways to cope with it by observing the actions of others.	When like, some of the other posts would go on, I would like watch and see what I would be doing in that case which helped too. (P6, February 21, post-game).

Table 2. Categories and sub-categories of coping strategies with rules of inclusion. (continued)

Category	Sub-Category	# of Athletes Reporting	Rule of Inclusion	Example Quote
Self-Reliance	Emotional/Behavioural Regulation	8	Athlete's attempts to control or conceal her emotions, reactions, or behaviours resulting from a stressor and/or waiting until an appropriate time to express those emotions or behaviours.	Inside I pretty much want to punch them in the face but on the outside I just kind of like try and look calm and not say anything to them. (P4, pre-season interview).
	Emotional Expression	5	Efforts made by the athlete to cope by expressing emotions resulting from a stressor. Included reports of getting angry, crying, or throwing tantrums. Also included reports of opposition or 'lashing out' by the athlete.	Sometimes I get angry and other times, like [I throw] tantrums and stuff. (P3, post-season interview).

CHAPTER 4b:

RESULTS II

Idiographic Profiles of Stressors and Coping Over The Season

The analysis of selected athletes' interviews and audio diaries are presented as chronological idiographic profiles that demonstrate each athlete's coping over the course of the season. It should be noted that the profiles presented describe only the coping processes associated with the athletes' most frequently recurring stressor reported in their audio diary data in order to illustrate the athletes' changes in coping (or lack thereof). A summary of all the athletes' profiles is provided in Appendix 6.0.

Having completed the analysis of all the athletes' coping profiles, it became apparent that three typologies of coping (*reactive coping, exploratory coping,* and *proactive coping*) accounted for the variations between the athletes' reports (see Table 3). A description of each typology is presented along with selected athletes' profiles to provide examples. For the remaining athletes' profiles, see Appendix 7.0.

Proactive Coping

This coping typology included three athletes who typically used coping in a manner consistent with Aspinwall and Taylor's (1997) proactive coping framework. These athletes also reported coping effectively with their stressors. On the rare occasion that these athletes reported ineffective coping, they demonstrated an awareness of their coping attempts by reflecting on their efforts in their audio diaries. Aspinwall and Taylor suggested that the elicitation and use of feedback regarding preliminary coping efforts is critical to the ongoing management of the potential stressor.

Table 3. Description of coping typologies.

Profiles	Summary of 'Typical' Profiles	Participants	Example of Profile
Proactive Coping	Typically used consistent coping strategies which were effective throughout the season. Used 'preventative' or 'anticipatory' coping as well as proactive coping skills. Reported an awareness of which strategies were effective.	P3, P5, P6	P3: Personal performance was a recurring stressor during the season due to her high personal expectations. She coped consistently and effectively with this stressor by using instrumental action during games/practices and then using planning and strategizing after games/practices. She said that she learned from her ineffective coping efforts and knew how to cope with potential stressors in the future.
Exploratory Coping	Athletes coded in this profile had a 'trial and error' approach to exploring effective coping strategies. Explored a variety of different coping strategies during the season, some of which were effective. Developed an awareness of which coping strategies were effective in coping with stressors and learned to deploy coping strategies in a somewhat anticipatory manner.	P1, P2, P4, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13	P1: Most frequently reported stressor was coach criticism. She reported inconsistent coping attempts during the season which included the use of mental withdrawal, helplessness, and emotional expression. In her post-season interview she said that she had developed an awareness of her coping efforts and would engage in cognitive restructuring in the future when coping with stressors.
Reactive Coping	This athlete explored different coping strategies without reflecting on her coping efforts or demonstrating an awareness of which strategies were effective and which ones were ineffective. These strategies tended to be deployed in reaction to stressors rather than in some kind of proactive or anticipatory manner. She did not learn which strategies were ineffective, thus she did not arrive at using more effective coping strategies as the season progressed.	P7	P7: Recurring stressors related to interpersonal stressors and team performance. She used behavioural avoidance, helplessness, mental withdrawal, problem solving, and emotional/behavioural regulation in reaction to her stressors. Instrumental action and behavioural regulation were effective strategies in coping with her stressors, but she did not change from ineffective to more effective strategies and did not report an awareness of which strategies were effective to cope with [redacted] stressors.

Thus, these athletes demonstrated proactive coping skills by reflecting on the stressor in their audio diaries. They also used planning/strategizing or maintained a positive mindset in order to prepare themselves to cope with future stressors, regardless of whether their initial coping attempts were effective. This is also consistent with the proactive coping framework, which purports that active preliminary coping attempts, even if they are ineffective, will yield information about the stressor which will enable the athlete to cope effectively in the future. An idiographic profile for P3 is presented as an example of an athlete who coped consistently and effectively throughout the season. See Table 4 for a summary of her coping process over the course of the season.

Example of proactive coping (P3). P3 was a grade 10 player on the team who had the third-highest minutes on the team (754 min), which was unusually high for a younger player on the team. In her pre-season interview she anticipated that her stressors for the season would be related to the competitive context. She was concerned about "tournaments … maybe like city championship games and provincials if we get there." However, in her audio diary data, only 20% of her reported stressors were related to the competitive context, whereas personal performance accounted for over one-third of her stressors. In her post-season interview, she said that personal performance was a recurring stressor for her because "I have a lot of expectations for myself." This is consistent with her goals for the season, which included personal improvement in order to extend her basketball career in subsequent years to the college or university level.

In an early-season audio diary entry, P3 reported that her stressor in a practice was personal performance. She said that "I wasn't pushing hard, like, as hard as I could have and I was getting tired easily and wasn't getting my shots in and I've been kind of

Table 4. Coping for P3: Personal performance.

	November 29	November 30	December 8	December16
Stressors	*Personal Performance* "I wasn't pushing hard, like, as hard as I could have and I was getting tired easily and wasn't getting my shots in and I've been kind of angry."	*Personal Performance* "I was kind of stressed because my passing wasn't on, and like, it wasn't hard enough."	*Personal Performance* "I didn't achieve my goals … I didn't really achieve what I was going for … I thought I could do better."	*Personal Performance* "I didn't do well and I wasn't playing good defence so I was angry at myself."
Coping Strategies	*Instrumental Action Planning/Strategizing* "I tried to push myself to go further … next time I should maybe think of like, positive things that I'm doing [well], you know, and like look at that instead of like, all the bad things that I'm doing."	*Instrumental Action* "I just you know, tried harder and I tried to really pass it hard."	*Instrumental Action* "I was like, trying to like, keep going … I'd just adjust, you know, and just drive instead or just pass it out to someone else."	*Instrumental Action* "I tried harder and then I stayed in longer and I actually did good … you have to keep pushing even when you are a bit sick or something's wrong."
Outcomes	*Somewhat Effective*	*Effective* "Toward the end of the practice it got better."	*Effective* "It was pretty effective."	*Effective* "It was effective. Um, I was pretty satisfied with my performance today."

angry" (November 29, post-practice). In order to cope with her stressor during practice, she said that she "tried to push myself to go further," which was an example of instrumental action. However she perceived that this strategy was ineffective, and said "I didn't really succeed in that."

Despite coping ineffectively with her stressor at the time, P3 demonstrated that she was aware of her coping attempts and used planning/strategizing in order to plan for future stressors. She concluded her audio diary by saying, "next time I should maybe think of like, positive things that I'm doing [well], you know, and like look at that instead of like, all the bad things that I'm doing." By using instrumental action during practice and planning/strategizing after practice, P3 said she was somewhat effective in coping with her personal performance and that she knew how to improve her performance for the next practice or game.

The following day, P3 reported the stressor of personal performance after another practice. She said "I was kind of stressed because my passing wasn't on, and like, it wasn't hard enough" (November 30, post-practice). In her attempt to cope with her stressor this time, she said that:

> To deal with it, I just you know, tried harder and I tried like, uh, like when I was right beside someone, like I tried to really pass it hard and … like think more about it than I usually do, cause usually I'm just like, you know, [I] just pass the ball. This time I was like, 'yeah, I have to pass it hard' … I was kind of effective, cause toward the end of the practice it got better.

On this occasion, P3 coped effectively by using instrumental action which included increased effort as well as focusing on the drill.

P3 next reported personal performance as a stressor in her audio diary entry of December 8, following a game at a home tournament in which the team lost to one of its rivals. She said that during the game, "I didn't achieve my goals … I didn't really achieve what I was going for … I thought I could do better … I wanted to take a shot right? And it just didn't, [it] kept not going in." She used instrumental action to cope with her stressor during the game. She reported that: "I'd just adjust, you know, and just drive instead or just pass it out to someone else who was like having a good shooting day. It was, it was pretty effective." P3 also used planning/strategizing as she saw the potential for the same stressor in her next game the following day. She said that she would "try to fix that [performance] for the next game that we have tomorrow."

Just over a week later, P3 again reported the stressor personal performance in her audio diary entry following a tournament game. She said that she was suffering from a cold, and in the first half of the game, "I went in and I didn't do well and I wasn't playing good defence so I was angry at myself … I was feeling really sick, but, I should have like, pushed myself more" (December 16, post-game). She said that to cope with her stressor, during the game "I got put back in the second half, so I kinda dealt with this like, I tried harder and then I stayed in longer and I actually did good." Again, she said that using instrumental action to cope with her personal performance was effective, and that "I actually did good … I was pretty satisfied with my performance today."

With one exception, this example shows that P3 coped consistently and effectively with her personal performance by using instrumental action during her games

or practices, and by using planning/strategizing in order to cope with future stressors. This reflects a proactive approach to coping whereby the athlete reflected on her coping efforts and used planning/strategizing to cope with potential future stressors to prevent them or modify the severity of their outcome. She said in her post-season interview that she usually followed a similar pattern when coping with her personal performance, and that "during the game I don't like, I'm not angry, like, I'm just focused on the game. And then after, like, I evaluate to myself, on my performance and stuff." She explained in her final audio diary entry that she was able to learn from her experiences during the season:

> It's easier after you do it the first couple of times … I guess you kind of know how to deal with the bad … you're expecting it another time and you're like 'okay, it's coming,' and you know how to deal with it. Instead of like, 'Oh my gosh, it's my first time' or whatever. (December 24, post-game).

P3 reported personal performance as a recurring stressor over the course of the season and coped with it effectively by using instrumental action and planning/strategizing consistently. It was not the use of each individual coping strategy which was effective for her in coping with her stressor, but it was the use of both strategies in tandem which enabled her to learn from her experiences and plan ahead for future stressors. By anticipating potential stressors and by eliciting and using feedback about her coping efforts, P3 demonstrated proactive coping skills to deal with her stressors.

Exploratory Coping

This category included eight athletes who used a variety of coping strategies inconsistently throughout the season. Their coping attempts were exploratory in nature, as they 'tried out' different coping strategies with varying results; some coping attempts were effective and others were ineffective. These athletes reported in their post-season interview that they learned about their coping attempts and which strategies were more effective than others. An idiographic profiles for P3 is provided to illustrate the way in which her coping changed over the course of the season.

Example of exploratory coping (P1). A summary of the stressors and coping used by P3 is provided in Table 5. P1 was a grade 11 starting player on the team who was highly competitive and had a goal of playing basketball at the college or university level. She played 864.5 minutes during the season, the highest for a grade 11 player and second-highest on the team. Her goals for the season included:

> Getting scholarships cause I want to play after high school but like as a team goal … I want them to like come together … it's like a goal for me to like, like even though I'm not a captain, but to like be that leader there for them and stuff like that. (Pre-season interview).

P1 reported coach criticism as a stressor in over 50% of her audio diary entries, however she did not anticipate it as a stressor in her pre-season interview. In fact, in her pre-season interview she said "[coach is] not a stress like this year … I like respect her cause like, I know [from] like talking to her … I can trust her kind of now" (pre-season interview).

Table 5. Coping for P1: Coach criticism.

	January 11	February 1	Post-Season Interview
Stressors	*Coach Criticism* "The stressors, basically [my coach] … she's ruining our team, and destroying my confidence."	*Coach Criticism* "One minute she [coach] is totally happy and when you play good she brings you up, but when you play bad she brings you down."	*Coach Criticism* "The whole thing with me and [coach] was just, I didn't know if she respected me."
Coping Strategies	*Helplessness* *Emotional Expression* "I couldn't really deal with the stressor. I kind of took them extremely personal and I basically went home and cried for five hours."	*Mental Withdrawal* "I just laugh at her because I know she knows nothing."	*Cognitive Restructuring* *Acceptance* "I realized I hit a point where like it was getting too ridiculous … if you surround yourself with negative thoughts, you become more negative."
Outcomes	*Ineffective* "I didn't deal good with these stressors at all."	*Somewhat Effective* "It's kind of a stressor but not really."	*Effective* "I think I got rid of that stress. So then next year, I can work on that [coping] differently."

However, the stressor of coach criticism was reported in an audio diary entry January 11 where P1 said the coach was "ruining our team and destroying my confidence" (post-game). This stressor stemmed from a lack of playing time, because she said that the coach "benched me for the whole game."

To cope with this stressor, P1 said that she "took [it] extremely personal and I basically went home and cried for five hours." This emotional expression was ineffective for her. Her coping effort also reflected helplessness, when she said that, "the bad thing is with her being the coach you can't deal with it very well, because it's not like [she] can be like, stop being our coach" (January 11, post-game).

The next time P1 reported coach criticism as a stressor was following a game where she felt that her efforts to be a leader on the team were being criticised by the coach. She said in her February 1 audio diary that:

> She [coach] said, 'You know, you're really trying hard to be a leader but it's just not working' … [but] people are telling me that I'm being a leader and like I believe I'm being a leader … But yet she pulled me aside and said that it's not working … one minute she's totally happy and when you play good she brings you up, but when you play bad she brings you down. (Post-game).

To cope with the stressor of coach criticism, P1 reported using mental withdrawal, which appeared to be an effective strategy. She said that "I just laugh at her because I know she knows nothing … It's kind of a stressor but not really" (February 1, post-game).

In her post-season interview, P1 said that she gained perspective of her coping process over the course of the season. She said that during her initial coping attempts "I

sort of like, I just wanted to blame [coach] for everything" but that she realized "if you surround yourself with negative thoughts, how like you become more negative." She described the change in her coping by saying:

> I think the hardest thing is to know that you're not perfect and I've realized that. It's like, you know, the whole season like, I thought, I expected more [playing time and respect] than what I was getting but I didn't [deserve it]. I, I was building up anger and I didn't know why I was building it up but it just kept building up. (Post-season interview).

P1 said that by using cognitive restructuring to stop focusing on the negative thoughts she experienced she was able to cope effectively with the stressor of coach criticism. Her coping throughout the season was inconsistent, but she reported in her post-season interview that she had learned from her coping attempts and was looking forward to the next season's challenges: "[this season] I handled it [stressors] with anger [and] I didn't realize I was handling it with anger, and then, when I look back, I realize that I did that. So then next year, I can work on that."

Despite anticipating that coach criticism would not be a stressor for her, P3 reported it as a recurring stressor throughout the season. She reported that to cope with it, she used helplessness, emotional expression, and mental withdrawal, which were ineffective coping strategies. Once she realized that her coping was ineffective, she explored the use of different coping strategies such as cognitive restructuring and acceptance, which were effective for her. This example demonstrates a sort of 'trial and error' method of exploring different coping strategies in order to determine which ones were effective, rather than coping proactively with potential stressors from the outset.

Reactive Coping

Although this category only included one athlete, she reported a type of coping that was clearly distinct from the proactive and exploratory profiles. This athlete (P7) reported using a variety of coping strategies inconsistently throughout the season in reaction to interpersonal stressors, most of which were ineffective. In her audio diaries, she did not demonstrate an awareness of which strategies were effective and which ones were ineffective to cope with stressors. She did not change from ineffective to consistently effective strategies over the course of the season. The idiographic profile for P10 is provided, along with a summary of her stressors and coping in Table 6.

Example of reactive coping (P7). As a grade 10 player, P7 was one of the youngest members of the team and she did not play for half the season due to an injured knee. When she resumed play, she had a starting spot on the team and attained the sixth-highest number of minutes played (584.5 min) despite playing only half the season. P7 predicted that stressors for the season would include:

> Trying to be able to catch up with [the team] … I just think it's going to be stressful because I've been missing like half the season trying to come back [halfway through] the season is going to be pretty hard. (Pre-season interview).

Despite anticipating that catching up with the team would be a stressor for her, in her first game back she scored the most points on the team, and was awarded tournament all-star the following week. In fact, she only reported personal performance as a stressor twice in her audio diary data, whereas 43% of her reported stressors related to interpersonal stressors (team dynamics and team performance).

Table 6. Coping for P7: Interpersonal stressors.

	January 11	February 7	March 1	March 7
Stressors	*Interpersonal Stressors* "People being very selfish and rude … they're not thinking about the team, they're thinking about themselves."	*Interpersonal Stressors* "Practice today was pretty frustrating … been frustrated for the past few, few weeks and it's just really complicated and stupid."	*Interpersonal Stressors* "I'm pissed off … no one will ever like pass me the ball."	*Interpersonal Stressors* "Practice was hell and pointless … I don't know what was going on but I'm so frustrated."
Coping Strategies	*Behavioural Avoidance* "I had to walk away cause I didn't want to listen to it."	*Helplessness* *Mental Withdrawal* "I'm going to try to ignore it … I can't really do much now can I?" *Instrumental Action* "I just worked harder and just played harder than them."	*Planning & Strategizing* *Helplessness* "Next time I think that I gotta yell more, I don't know. I don't really know what to do."	*Emotional/Behavioural Regulation* "I just want to yell and shout and kick and scream and beat up everyone." "Have all these feelings bundled up and don't let it out."
Outcomes	*Ineffective*	*Ineffective* "I'm just frustrated and it's making me angry."	*Ineffective* "It's just frustrating, it's just making me mad."	*Ineffective*

Shortly after her return to the court, P7 reported that she was concerned by interpersonal stressors which were affecting the team's performance on the court. She said in her audio diary of January 11 that:

> It was very stressful, and then everyone was screaming at each other and getting upset … people being very selfish and rude and it's just not, they're not playing … they're not thinking about the team, they're thinking about themselves. (Post-game).

In her post-season interview, she reported that "I had to walk away cause I didn't want to listen to it, so I went to talk to the [other team's] coach" (post-season interview). P7 reported in her post-season interview that at the time she enjoyed talking to the other coach because "he said I'm a good player and all that," however in her audio diary entry she said that she was ineffective in coping with the interpersonal stressors on the team. She reported that "it was just stupid and it was ridiculous" and that the conflict was "something they [teammates] need to work on" (January 11, post-game).

Interpersonal stressors were reported in P7's audio diary of February 7, following a practice in preparation for a large tournament. P7 said that "practice today was pretty frustrating … I've just been frustrated for the past few, few weeks and it's just really complicated and stupid." In her post-season interview she said:

> I felt like the posts were kind of jealous of me in a way, especially [name], in a way, cause … a drill wouldn't be going on, but she'd still try to like, compete against me … it just made me so mad and … she'd be like, pushing me on defence … they're like, being so aggressive. Yeah, like,

> you're supposed to do stuff on defence, but they were just being so like, uncalled for. (Post-season interview).

P7 reported that she used mental withdrawal and helplessness to cope with her stressors. In her audio diary entry she said, "I'm going to try to ignore it … I can't really do much now can I?" (February 7, post-practice). She said that this was ineffective in coping with her stressors during practice, concluding her audio diary by saying: "I'm just frustrated and it's making me angry" (February 7, post-practice). However in her post-season interview, she said that she "just worked harder and just played harder than them [after that]. Make them work for the spot." Reflecting on the season, she said that she was somewhat effective in coping with her stressors, although at the time she said that she was ineffective in coping with her stressors.

P7 next reported interpersonal stressors following a practice in preparation for a game in the city championships. She said that she was stressed because she felt that her interpersonal stressors were causing her teammates to be uncooperative on the court, resulting in a poor team performance. She said in her audio diary that:

> I'm doing all this work and all they do is take their sweet time … [they] pass it when I'm not open anymore. It's gay and annoying and I hate that … I tried telling them to pass to me early but no they don't. It's just frustrating, it's just making me mad. (March 1, post-practice).

In attempting to cope with her stressors, she said "I don't really know what to do about that" (March 1, post-practice). Although she expressed helplessness about her stressors, P7 also used planning and strategizing in attempting to cope with them. She concluded

her audio diary by saying "next time I think that I gotta yell more" in order to improve the team's performance on the court.

Despite planning to be more vocal on the court, P7 continued to report interpersonal stressors and team performance as stressors in the remainder of the season. In her audio diary of March 7, she recorded a particularly emotional entry in which she said:

> I am pretty f•••ing pissed off right now … I'm very stressed out as hell … I don't know what was going on but I'm so frustrated. I don't know, I don't even want like, not play anymore. This is retarded. Um, I'm shaking, I'm pissed, um I'm just so angry, I think it's pointless … I'm sorry. I'm just so angry I just want to yell and shout and kick and scream and beat up everyone, and yeah. But yeah, it's … I didn't really, I've never felt like this before but I am just so angry right now … practice was hell and pointless. (Post practice).

In this particular situation, P7 recorded her audio diary entry directly after practice and returned to a post-practice meeting with the team without letting on to the researcher or the team that she was upset. In her post-season interview, she reported that she used emotional and behavioural regulation to cope effectively with her stressors, saying that she had "all these feelings bundled up and don't let it out" (March 7, post-practice). It seems that her previous planning/strategizing to cope with her stressors by being more vocal on the court did not play out the next time the stressor arose and she reacted by becoming upset and using emotional expression.

Over the course of the season, P7 reported recurring interpersonal stressors and team performance stressors. She reacted to her stressors by becoming upset and used a variety of strategies to cope such as behavioural avoidance, helplessness, mental withdrawal, and emotional/behavioural regulation, although they were ineffective. P7 was inconsistent in her coping attempts and did not change her ineffective strategies to consistently more effective ones over the course of the season. In her post-season interview, she did not report learning how to cope more effectively with her stressors in the future. At one point she did attempt to use planning/strategizing to cope with her stressors but it did not translate into effective coping the next time she reported the stressor. She reported that she did not know what to do to cope with her stressors, she did not report learning from her past experiences, and her coping did not change over the course of the season. This example demonstrates a reactive type of coping, whereby the athlete explored different coping strategies as she confronted her stressors. However, she did not reflect upon her experiences and did not learn which strategies were ineffective, thus she did not arrive at using more effective coping strategies as the season progressed.

CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION

Findings from Group Analyses

The overall purpose of this exploratory study was to examine how a team of female adolescent basketball athletes attempted to cope with stressors over the course of the season. The first purpose was to determine what stressors were recurrent for this group of athletes over the course of the season. Group level analyses were conducted to establish the context of stressors experienced by these athletes over the season. In terms of the specific stressor themes, the most frequently reported stressors related to coaches' behaviours (poor coach communication and coach criticism) followed by team dynamics and performance expectations. These results are generally consistent with previous research in the sport psychology literature. For example, Scanlan et al. (1991) reported that stressors among former elite figure skaters included negative aspects of competition, negative significant-other relationships (team dynamics), demands of skating, and personal struggles (which included physical/mental difficulties, doubts about talent, and life stressors). Similarly, Holt and Hogg (2002) reported that members of a female national soccer team reported sources of stress related to the demands of international soccer, coaches' communication, competitive stressors, and distractions (the latter three of which are similar to the performance expectations stressors reported in the present study). Although the present findings are not particularly unique, they demonstrate that these athletes experienced similar stressors to other competitive athletes and add to the external coherence of this study.

The group level analysis also revealed that the context of this team consisted of a 'climate for stress,' in which the coaches' behaviours were central to the stressors reported by the athletes. Similar findings have been reported in studies of elite female athletes. For example, Holt and Hogg (2002) found that members of a women's soccer world cup team reported their coach's communication in training and game situations as a stressor. Based on the current findings and previous research, it is not clear whether females experience more coach communication related stressors than male athletes. However, Goyen and Anshel (1998) reported that females reported a higher stress intensity than males for the stressor social evaluation and adolescents were more stressed than adults due to the actions of other (i.e., coaches and parents). Future research that examines gender differences in athletes' appraisal of coach communication related stressors may be a valuable addition to the literature.

One applied implication of the identification of stressors related to the coach is that improvements in communication may actually serve to reduce the stressors appraised by athletes. Based on seminal work in coach effectiveness training, Smith, Smoll, and Barnett (1995) reported that youth sport athletes whose coaches received social support and stress-reduction training had lower performance anxiety than those athletes whose coaches did not receive the training. The current findings (in addition to the findings of Holt & Hogg, 2002), show that coaches were perceived as a stressor rather than a social resource to help athletes cope. Overall, it appears that improving coach communication strategies and training coaches about the importance of social support may help to alleviate some of the stressors athletes appraise.

The second research question addressed what coping strategies this group of female adolescent athletes used to cope with stressors over the course of the season. Group level analysis identified seven categories of coping strategies and 15 subcategories which were consistent with previous coping research (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). The consistency of the present findings with previous research is not surprising given that the group level coping themes were deductively matched with existing 'families of coping' reported in the general psychology literature.

The group level coping themes were also broadly consistent with coping strategies reported in the sport psychology literature. For example in the study by Holt and Hogg (2002), athletes used reappraising, social resources, performance behaviours (i.e. on-field communication and warming up) and blocking to cope with their stressors. In a study of 17 female national champion figure skaters, Gould et al. (1993b) reported that athletes used coping strategies such as positive focus, social support, time management, precompetitive mental preparation, rational thinking, isolation/deflection of the stressor. The latter two are strategies are similar to cognitive restructuring and avoidance strategies reported in the present study, and all these coping strategies were reported by athletes in this study. The findings in the present study also suggest that athletes use a range of coping strategies to deal with stressors, often in combination, which is consistent with previous findings (Crocker & Graham, 1995; Gould et al., 1993b; Nicholls, Holt, & Polman, 2005).

The main limitation of the group level analyses of stressors and coping strategies reported over the entire season is that the dynamic nature of the coping process (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1994) cannot be examined. In fact, qualitative studies in the

sport psychology literature have often relied on single interview 'snapshots' of stressors and coping (e.g., Gould et al., 1993a; Anshel & Delany, 2001), whereas only a few studies have examined coping as a process (e.g., Holt & Dunn, 2004; Holt et al., 2007; Nicholls et al., 2006). The group level results showed that the findings were consistent with previous research and lend external validity and credibility to the analyses. However, the central findings of the current study are reflected by the idiographic analyses of coping processes over time.

Findings from Idiographic Analyses

The first finding arising from the idiographic analyses was that several athletes' reports demonstrated some qualitative changes in their stressor appraisals over the course of the season. Eight athletes reported changes in their stressor appraisals whereas four athletes did not report changes in their stressor appraisals. For example, in terms of stressors, P13 initially reported personal performance, which changed to team dynamics (coach criticism and role confusion), pressure to perform, lack of confidence, and playing time as the season progressed. On the other hand, P6 did not report any changes in her stressor appraisals over the course of the season (she consistently reported the stressor of personal performance). In general, these findings showed that for most of the athletes stressors changed over time with changing circumstances. This key finding reflects the dynamic person-environment interactions that are at the heart of the coping process (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Furthermore, these findings demonstrate the importance of conducting individual longitudinal analyses of stressors in sport.

Findings also provided descriptions about how athletes' deployment of coping strategies varied in response to different stressors. This is an important issue because few

studies have actually connected specific stressor-appraisals with specific coping responses. For example, group level studies of stressors and coping (e.g., Anshel & Delany, 2001; Gould et al., 1993a; Scanlan et al., 1991) limit the researchers' ability to specifically connect stressor-appraisals with coping responses. Although group-level studies of stressors and coping have suggested that athletes tend to use particular coping strategies when coping with stressors, Anshel and Delaney (2001) noted that "the links between appraisals and coping … are needed areas for additional research" (p.350).

In terms of connecting stressors with coping responses at the individual level, some subtle variations emerged. Specifically, there were variations in the consistency by which athletes deployed coping strategies over the season. Some athletes were relatively consistent whereas others used a more 'trial and error' approach. For example, P5 reported using instrumental action to cope with her personal performance stressor. On the other hand, P8 tried using a variety of coping strategies including acceptance, delegation, mental withdrawal, and cognitive restructuring to deal with her stressors of playing time and role confusion. If athletes used the same coping strategy to deal with the same stressor appraisal, this would suggest the presence of a dispositional coping style. Indeed, Anshel (1996) suggested that there are four types of coping styles used by young athletes: problem focused/approach, emotion focused/approach, problem focused/avoidance, and emotion focused/avoidance. Although in the current study there were some examples of athletes using the same coping strategies to deal with the same stressor-appraisals, there were more examples of variations in the types of coping strategies deployed to deal with specific stressors at the individual level. Hence, findings support the dynamic

interactional nature of the coping process rather than the existence of clear dispositional coping styles.

Another issue these findings (i.e., connecting coping strategies to stressor-appraisals) raise is that coping strategies, in and of themselves, are neither effective nor ineffective. This is important from an applied perspective because it suggests that practitioners should not teach a 'package' of coping strategies to all athletes, but rather tailor coping interventions to individual athlete's specific needs. Similarly, athletes should learn a variety of potential coping strategies which may be used effectively in a variety of situations. Again, this contradicts the presence of a coping style.

Another finding was that all the athletes used cognitive restructuring and the athletes in this study reported using more problem focused coping strategies than emotion focused coping strategies. This is different from previous research which has suggested that female athletes used more emotion-focused coping strategies than males (e.g. Hammermeister & Burton, 2004; Madden et al., 1989). It may be that when compared to males, females do use more emotion focused coping strategies, however not to the exclusion of problem focused coping strategies. Male athletes were not included in the present study and it was therefore impossible to make a comparison between male and female athletes, however the present findings do propose an area for future research examining the emergence of gender differences in the use of coping strategies over time.

The third research question of this study addressed effective coping in sport for female adolescent athletes. Findings showed that coping effectiveness was conceptualized by athletes in different ways. For example, when confronted with a performance related stressor, athletes deemed coping to be effective if it helped them deal

with the demands of performance. On the other hand, for non-performance issues (e.g., team dynamics), coping effectiveness appeared to be conceptualized by the athletes in terms of helping to reduce the negative emotions arising from the stressor. Hence, coping effectiveness was subjective and appeared to be related to the athletes' stressor appraisal and goal commitment.

The ways in which athletes conceptualized coping effectiveness helps to further distinguish between the explanations of coping effectiveness presented in the literature. One explanation of coping effectiveness is that no coping strategy is inherently effective or ineffective, but that effective coping relates to the choice of coping strategy within a particular context (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Crocker, Kowalski, & Graham, 1998; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Alternatively, Gould et al. (1993a) suggested that coping effectiveness may be related to the automaticity of response, whereas the outcome model (Folkman, 1991) suggests that coping effectiveness is related to the selection of a coping strategy which promotes a favourable outcome for the individual. Lazarus (1999) suggested another view that effective coping concerns a goodness-of-fit between the person's appraisal of a stressor and the selection of a coping strategy. For example, problem-focused strategies would be most effective in controllable situations, whereas emotion-focused strategies would be most effective in uncontrollable situations.

The present findings support the idea that coping effectiveness is related to the choice of a coping strategy given the context within which it occurs (i.e., Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Crocker et al., 1998; Nicholls et al., 2005), as well as the idea that coping strategies are neither effective nor ineffective (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004;

Lazarus, 1984). For example, P13 reported that in coping with interpersonal stressors, she initially used avoidance to cope with the conflict she faced in practice. However, this athlete also reported using information seeking after the practice in order to resolve the issue. It would have been unproductive to cope with the stressor during practice, as the coach would not likely have stopped the drill in order to allow the athletes to sort out their interpersonal conflict. Thus, the athlete chose from a variety of coping skills to best fit the demands of the situation, understanding which skill would be effective at a particular time, given the context of the stressor. Although previous research has suggested that avoidance is an ineffective coping strategy (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Nicholls et al., 2005), this example supports the idea that coping effectiveness relates to the athlete's choice of an appropriate coping strategy at the appropriate time. Avoidant forms of coping may be effective in the short term if subsequent coping efforts include more active forms of coping (see Aldwin, 1994).

It may be that previous research examining the effectiveness of coping strategies has not taken into account the appropriate timing in the deployment of coping strategies, which could result in ineffective coping. Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) suggested that individuals who learn active coping skills should understand when those skills are likely to be effective and when they would be ineffective, and can then decide whether to switch to other coping strategies (i.e., cognitive restructuring, avoidance, emotion-focused strategies). The present findings relating to the timing of coping effectiveness do not appear to have been previously reported in the sport psychology literature. This could be due the fact that much research has examined coping from a group level perspective using retrospective or recall measures, which do not reveal the temporal aspect of coping.

Potentially, athletes may explore a variety of strategies and eventually discover that they cope most effectively by using a few 'tried and true' strategies, but maintain an arsenal of back-up strategies for use in times of need. Future research might examine the exploration of coping strategies at different times and in different contexts as athletes learn about the effectiveness of their coping efforts.

The final stage of this study involved combining the data with previous research and theory to create an overall conceptualization of the coping process over time. A framework of three coping typologies was presented. These coping profiles are not intended to describe dispositional coping styles. Rather, based on proactive coping theory (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997), these coping typologies describe and explain ways in which athletes *learned to cope* over the course of the season. Specifically, there were variations in the ways in which athletes learned to cope.

Three distinct typologies describing how athletes learned to cope over the course of the season were labelled proactive, exploratory, and reactive. By comparing the results of this study to the framework of proactive coping proposed by Aspinwall and Taylor (1997), it seems that the athlete described as a 'reactive coper' used a variety of coping strategies without reflecting on her coping efforts. The term 'reactive coping' reflects Schwarzer and Knoll's (2003) description of reactive coping, whereby individuals strive to deal with a past or present stressor or to compensate for or accept harm or loss. This represents a lack of engagement in the final stage of the proactive coping framework, which consisted of eliciting and using feedback to learn about the stressor and her initial coping efforts. Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) described this final stage as "critical" (p. 427) to the effective ongoing management of potential stressors. From an applied

perspective, this stage highlights the importance of athletes' self-reflection and debriefing in order to enhance self-awareness.

The 'exploratory copers' demonstrated an unfolding awareness of their coping, which suggests some engagement in eliciting and using feedback about their coping efforts, however they were still at times ineffective in coping with their stressors. These athletes explored the use of a variety of coping strategies and at times reflected on their coping attempts in order to learn from them. These athletes reported learning how to cope effectively with their stressors by the end of the season.

The 'proactive copers' demonstrated an established awareness of their coping attempts and they were capable of eliciting and using feedback about their coping efforts by reflecting on their efforts. Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) suggested that eliciting and using feedback about initial coping efforts is critical because "systematic processing may serve to identify situational contingencies that would influence subsequent actions with respect to the potential stressor" (p. 429). It may be that one important difference between the three typologies of coping is the use and elicitation of feedback about coping efforts and the athlete's ability to reflect on and learn from previous experiences. Thus, a critical part of 'exploratory coping' involves athletes' learning about how and when to use coping strategies appropriately.

By comparing these three typologies of coping to existing coping literature (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Schwarzer & Knoll, 2003), it is proposed that athletes may experience a progression along a continuum from reactive coping to exploratory coping, and eventually engaging in proactive coping. A visual representation of this continuum is provided in Figure 5.

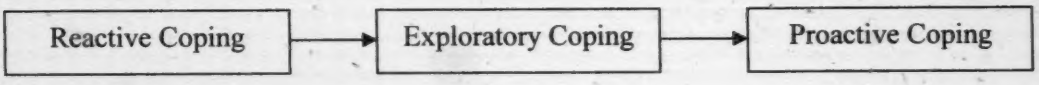

Figure 5. Continuum of coping.

In the reactive coping profile, athletes may cope with stressors by using a variety of coping strategies but without eliciting and using feedback in order to learn from their experiences. The exploratory coping profile includes athletes who are exploring a variety of coping strategies and who are beginning to engage in the elicitation and use of feedback in order to learn about the effectiveness of their coping attempts. In this stage, athletes may learn about the appropriate timing in the deployment of a particular coping strategy. The proactive coping profile includes athletes who have explored a range of strategies and have an understanding of when a particular coping strategy is likely to be effective at a particular time in a particular context. These athletes also engage in eliciting and using feedback about their coping attempts in order to learn from their experiences.

This continuum of coping is intended as an area for future research and is as yet untested, however, it does propose some interesting lines of investigation. First, research is necessary to confirm or refute whether such a progression of coping actually exists within sport contexts. Second, if there is a progression in coping which may be found among athletes, what are the 'agents of change' which may move athletes from one stage to the next? At what point in athletes' development do they begin to engage in the elicitation and use of feedback about their coping attempts? From an applied perspective, what role do sport psychology consultants play in the development of proactive coping skills and the elicitation and use of feedback about coping efforts? Finally, what is the role of parents, coaches, and peers in the development of proactive coping skills? In the

current study, P5 reported that in previous seasons she was a 'reactive coper' who used a variety of coping strategies to deal with her stressors. She said that following a conversation with a respected coach that she began to use more proactive coping skills which were effective for her in coping with future stressors. Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) suggested that parents (and other influential adults) play a role in the development of proactive coping skills, however this has not yet been confirmed or refuted.

Proactive Coping Theory in Sport

Having used a framework of proactive coping to guide the investigation of coping in the present study, it was important to examine the extent to which the results were consistent with the framework and the various conceptualizations of the theory.

There was some evidence among the 'proactive coping' group of athletes to suggest that the use of proactive coping strategies may decrease the number of stressors athletes experience and potentially improve their performance. There is some previous research which may suggest that athletes who plan ahead and prepare themselves in anticipation of future stressors may experience high performance levels (Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, Medberry, & Peterson, 1999; Orlick & Partington, 1988). For example, Gould et al. (1999) found that US Olympic athletes who prepared themselves to deal with unexpected stressors performed at or above expectations. Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) suggested that proactive copers may experience less stress during a stressful encounter, which may lead to improved performances in the context of sport. Thus, further research examining the performances of athletes who use proactive coping strategies versus athletes who do not use such strategies would be useful.

A second tenet of proactive coping as proposed by Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) is that individuals with a range of coping resources are likely to cope effectively with potential stressors. In the present study, the resources reported by the athletes included past experiences, the presence of teammates who were a source of support and comfort, time management and organization, and some athletes reported influential coaches as a resource in learning about their stressors and coping and helped them to reflect on their coping efforts. Thus, future research might examine the resources available to athletes in order to assist in coping proactively with stressors.

Proactive coping also predicts that many stressors are or can be avoided, and that their severity can be decreased if they are unavoidable. The athletes in the proactive coping group demonstrated that by planning ahead, eliciting and using feedback, and by maintaining a positive attitude, they were able to anticipate stressors and cope effectively with them. Holt (2003) reported in an exploratory study of a male professional cricketer that the athlete used some proactive coping skills related to confidence building and maintaining concentration in situations where he anticipated threat. Thus, it seems that proactive coping may be important in providing a perspective of the ways in which athletes prepare for future stressors through the use of proactive coping skills as well as strategies such as visualization, concentration, and self-talk.

Although proactive coping within sport can provide a perspective of the ways in which athletes prepare for potential stressors, there are two potential limitations to using proactive coping theory. First, an emphasis on appraisal and recognition of stressors may give rise to hypervigilance, which could result in the athlete attending to a number of real or imagined potential stressors without coping effectively with any of them (Aspinwall &

Taylor, 1997). This sort of emphasis on recognition and appraisal of stressors may reduce the athletes' ability to engage in reactive coping when necessary to cope with unexpected or unforeseen stressors. Aspinwall and Taylor acknowledged this potential liability and recommended further research into how individuals allocate attention to multiple potential threats. From an applied perspective, it would be wise to inform athletes of the need to develop a balanced array of both proactive skills (i.e., recognition and appraisal) and reactive coping skills (i.e., cognitive restructuring) in order to deal with a wide range of stressors in sport. Second, the findings from this study do not support the idea that active coping strategies are more effective than avoidant coping strategies (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). Rather these findings support the idea that coping strategies are neither effective nor ineffective in and of themselves and the classification of coping strategies should be based on their adaptive function (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007), as coping strategies can often serve many different functions depending on the context of the stressor. Future research examining coping from a developmental level may examine in greater detail the various classifications of coping strategies and their application to sport.

Personality factors, although not assessed in this study, may also play an important role in the coping process. Lazarus (1999) suggested that personality variables such as goal commitment and beliefs about self and the world as important influences on coping. Indeed, recent evidence from the sport psychology literature suggests a link between personality factors and coping. In a recent study of 137 female intercollegiate volleyball players, adaptive perfectionism (i.e., characterized by an individual who sets high personal standards but is able to accept personal limitations and setbacks) was

significantly correlated with a tendency for athletes to use problem-focused coping strategies during a slump in their performance (Dunn, Gamache, Causgrove Dunn, & Holt, 2007). Similarly, maladaptive perfectionism (i.e., characterized by an individual who sets high personal standards but is unable to accept personal limitations and setbacks) was significantly correlated with an increased tendency to work and an increased tendency to employ avoidant or emotion-focused coping strategies. Personality factors may also affect an individual's appraisal of potential stressors. For example, athletes who are exhibit high competitive trait anxiety (Martens & Burton, 1990) may have a tendency to appraise stressors differently than athletes with low competitive trait anxiety. The examination of personality factors as they relate to the coping process remains an area for further research.

Strengths and Limitations

The collection of audio diary data was a strength to this research because this method allows the researcher to capture stressors, coping efforts, and outcomes closer to their actual occurrence, while minimizing recall error among the participants. It could be argued that ecological momentary assessment (Stone et al., 1998) would be even more accurate in the collection of stress and coping data, however there is a limit to how 'close' you can get to the actual occurrence of a stressor within the context of sport without detracting from or interfering with the athlete's performance. It would be difficult to have an athlete pause mid-game to complete even a brief measure of stress and coping. Given the context within which the stressors occurred, a daily audio diary approach to data collection was beneficial for the purposes of the current study.

The creation of idiographic profiles and analysis at the individual level was another strength to this study which yielded different results than the group-level analysis of the same data. Analysis at the group level revealed important contextual factors on the team as well as providing a summary of stressors and coping strategies used by the athletes during the season. However, group level analysis of stress and coping is insufficient for understanding coping as a recursive process (Lazarus, 1999) which unfolds and changes over time. Given that audio diaries were collected in a longitudinal manner, it was possible to analyse the data at the individual level in order to examine each athlete's coping process as it unfolded over the course of the season. Finally, the credibility of this study was enhanced by the detail and quality of the data collected from the athletes and coaches which suggests data saturation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Due to the data collection from a single team of athletes, the generalizability of the results is obviously limited although it does provide a reference point for future research examining the dynamic interactional nature of the coping process. The small sample size also restricted the analysis of any differences in coping due to age or experience playing basketball. Similar studies should examine stress and coping processes among a diverse group of male and female athletes and examine in greater detail the developmental differences in coping across different age groups of athletes.

The issue of reactivity should also be considered from two perspectives; the presence of the researcher and the use of audio diaries. In considering the effect of the investigator on the data which was collected, Patton (2002) suggested that long-term observation and immersion in the context are useful in order to counter the effects of investigator reactivity. However, another question remains: Did the use of the audio

diaries influence athletes coping over the season? In order to address this issue, the athletes were asked in their post-season interview whether using the audio diaries affected the way they coped over the course of the season. Seven athletes said that using the audio diary did not affect their coping, three said that it affected their coping somewhat, and three said that it did affect their coping in that it enabled them to reflect on their stressors. It is important to point out that not all the athletes experienced a change in their coping (i.e., the proactive or reactive coping groups) and that the athletes who reported changes in their coping did not report the same changes in the same manner over the same period of time.

It should also be noted that the groups of coping (reactive, exploratory, and proactive) were created based on the athletes' most frequently recurring stressors. In the future it would be useful to examine athletes' coping in regards to all their reported stressors to determine whether an athlete who is a 'reactive coper' in one context might be a 'proactive coper' when confronted with a different stressor.

CHAPTER 6:

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The first research question addressed by this study was to determine what stressors were recurrent for a team of female adolescent basketball athletes over the course of the season. The most frequently reported stressors related to coach behaviours, team dynamics, and performance expectations. These group level results of this study are largely consistent with previous descriptive studies examining stress and coping at the group level. The identification of stressors related to the coaches' behaviours suggests that improving coach communication may be beneficial in reducing the overall stressors appraised by the athletes. This is consistent with studies by Holt and Hogg (2002) and Smith et al. (1995).

The second research question addressed by this study was to determine what coping strategies female adolescent athletes used to cope with stressors over the course of the season. Group level analysis revealed families of coping strategies which were consistent with previous research. This was not surprising as the analysis of group level coping themes was guided by previously reported coping literature.

Group level analysis of the data revealed a climate for stress within the team which appeared to influence the nature of the stressors reported by the athletes. Stressors related to playing time, performance expectations, and team dynamics all seemed to stem from the coaches' behaviours. Life stressors and physical stressors were unrelated to the coach's behaviours and occurred in the wider context of the athletes' sport experience. Stressors and coping strategies were often reported concurrently, therefore studies which merely list discrete stressors may not accurately reflect athletes' experiences in sport.

Idiographic analyses of the athletes' data resulted in three typologies of coping: reactive coping, exploratory coping, and proactive coping. The reactive coping typology contained only one athlete who reported using a variety of coping strategies in reaction to her stressors, most of which were ineffective. She did not demonstrate an awareness of which strategies were effective and which ones were ineffective and she did not appear to learn from her past coping attempts. The exploratory coping category included eight athletes who used a variety of coping strategies throughout the season. Their coping attempts were exploratory in nature and they 'tried out' strategies with varying results. These athletes demonstrated a developing awareness of their coping efforts and reported in their post-season interviews that they had learned which strategies were effective. The proactive coping category included three athletes who appeared to use 'tried and true' strategies in coping with their stressors. They reported coping effectively with their stressors and on the rare occasions that they coped ineffectively, they demonstrated an awareness of their coping efforts in order to cope effectively with their stressors in the future. The main difference between these three typologies of coping was the athletes' elicitation and use of feedback about their coping efforts. Athletes who engaged in the elicitation and use of feedback appeared to learn about their coping in order to cope more effectively with stressors in the future.

The idiographic analyses revealed patterns of stressor appraisals and coping which are unique to sport stress and coping literature. First, several athletes reported a change in their stressors over the course of the season, which supports the dynamic person-environment interactions within the coping process (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus, 1999). Second, the athletes' use of coping strategies varied in response to

different stressors, and there was variation in the consistency with which athletes deployed coping strategies over the course of the season. Some athletes were relatively consistent in their coping while others used a 'trial and error' approach. These results highlight the importance of conducting individual longitudinal analyses of stressors and coping in sport.

The third research question addressed by this study was what constituted effective coping in sport for female adolescent athletes over the course of a season. Coping effectiveness was conceptualized by the athletes in different ways. When stressors related to performance, athletes reported effective coping if it helped them to deal with the demands of their performance or improved their performance. For non-performance stressors, effective coping was conceptualized in terms of reducing the negative emotions arising from the stressor. These results suggest the need for more valid ways of assessing coping effectiveness within sport.

The present findings support the idea that coping effectiveness is related to the choice of a coping strategy given the context within which it occurs as well as the idea that coping strategies are neither effective nor ineffective. Findings suggest that the appropriate timing of the deployment of coping strategies is a key issue in coping research which has not previously been reported.

The results of this study suggest that athletes may experience a progression from reactive to exploratory to proactive coping. As athletes explore a variety of coping strategies and use feedback about their coping efforts, they appear to learn about their effectiveness in a given context and the appropriate timing of their deployment. By incorporating aspects of proactive coping (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997) as well as Lazarus'

(1999) transactional theory of coping, this progression provides a point of reference for future research examining the development of coping among adolescent athletes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.0. Demographic form provided to athletes.

This information will be used to provide background details about our sample. I will only report the general averages and trends (e.g., a sample sentence might be that "the mean age of the sample was 15.5 years, and 75% of their parents had completed high school").

Participant Number: _____

Information About You

Age: _____

Years playing basketball: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Position: _____

Grade in school: _____

Do you play any other sports? Yes No
(if yes, please list them)

_____
_____
_____

Information About Your Parents

Mother's Occupation: _____

Mother's Level of Education (please check one):

Did not complete high school	Completed high school	College diploma	Undergraduate degree	Graduate degree

Father's Occupation: _____

Father's Level of Education (please check one):

Did not complete high school	Completed high school	College diploma	Undergraduate degree	Graduate degree

Appendix 2.0. Athlete pre-season interview.

Area	Main Questions	Probe Questions
Sport Involvement	At what age did you start playing basketball? Have you participated in any other sports?	How long have you been playing basketball? At what level of competition have you participated?
Goals	What are your goals for the season? If you were to attain your goals this season, what would you do next?	How important is each of these goals to you? If you had to rank these goals in order of importance, how would you rank them? Why would you rank them in this order? What is it about 'X' that makes it more important than 'Y' for you?
Sport Stressors	A stressful situation is one where you might feel anxious or worried. It might include feelings of butterflies in your stomach or sweaty palms, etc. Can you describe an example of a stressful situation you have experienced in basketball?	How stressful was that for you (on a scale of one to ten, where one is not stressful at all and ten is most stressful, how would you rate it?) What was stressful about it? Are there any other stressful situations you have experienced in sport?
Life Stressors	Can you describe stressful situations in school, your family or other areas of your life?	Do any of these stressful situations influence your sport performance?
Coping	Thinking of a stressful situation in basketball (use their example), what have you done to try and deal with that in the past? Did you always deal with [stressful situation] in that way? How effective would you say you were in dealing with that situation?	What have you thought/done to try and deal with this situation?
Future Temporal Orientation	Thinking ahead, what do you think will be stressful about the upcoming basketball season? How do you know that will be stressful for you? Do you plan ahead for things that might be stressful in basketball?	What is it about 'X' that makes you think it will be stressful? (Why do you think that will be stressful?) What is it that tells you that might be a stressful situation for you? If so, how do you try to plan ahead for stressful situation? What do you think/do to plan for those situations?
Social Network	Do you seek advice when you are confronted with a stressful situation? Who helps you deal with stress?	
Follow-up	If someone you knew was faced with a stressful situation in basketball, what would you say to them?	Is there anything you would tell them based on your own experiences?

Appendix 3.0. Athlete post-season interview.

Area	Main Questions	Probe Questions
Goals	Do you remember what your goals were for the season? (if not, remind them from first interview) Did you achieve your goals for the season?	If yes, how do you think you achieved your goals? What did you think/do after you achieved your goals? If no, why do you think you didn't achieve your goals?
Sport Stressors	A stressful situation is one where you might feel anxious or worried. It might include feelings of butterflies in your stomach or sweaty palms, etc. Can you describe an example of a stressful situation you have experienced in basketball this season? (use audio-diary information as an example if necessary)	How stressful was that for you (on a scale of one to ten, where one is not stressful at all and ten is most stressful, how would you rate it?) What was stressful about it? What was it about the stressor that caused you discomfort? Are there any other stressful situations you have experienced this season?
Life Stressors	Can you describe stressful situations in school, your family or other areas of your life you experienced this season?	Did any of these stressful situations influence your sport performance?
Coping	How did you attempt to deal with 'X' situation (use their example)? Did you try anything to deal with the stressor which perhaps did not make the situation better? Were you effective in dealing with that situation?	What have you thought/done to try and deal with this situation? If so, what did you do next? If so, what is it that made your coping efforts effective? If not, what was ineffective about your coping efforts?
	Can you think of anything positive that came out of that situation?	If yes, did that make it easier to cope with the stressful situation?
Photo Elicitation	Now I'm going to show you some pictures of situations in games and practices. For each photo, I want you to tell me how stressful the situation was for you and how you dealt with the situation.	Use same questions from stress/coping section above.
Future Temporal Orientation	Thinking about the stressors you faced during the season, did you expect to face those situations before they happened?	If yes, why did you expect to face those stressors? If no, what was unexpected about those stressors? What did you think/do, knowing that those stressors would arise?
Social Network	When you were faced with a stressful event, did you seek advice from anyone?	Who did you seek advice from? How did they help you to cope with the stressful event? What did they say/do?
Follow-up	Do you deal with stressful situations differently now compared to the beginning of the season? If someone you knew was faced with a stressful situation in basketball, what would you say to them? Did using the audio diaries affect the way you coped with stressors over the course of the season?	How is your coping different from the beginning of the season to now? What do you think/do differently? Is there anything you would tell them based on your experiences this season?

Appendix 4.0. Coach pre-season interview.

Area	Main Questions	Probe Questions
Goals	What are your goals for the season? What are the team's goals for the season?	How important is each of these goals to you? If you had to rank these goals in order of importance, how would you rank them? Why would you rank them in this order? What is it about 'X' that makes it more important than 'Y' for you?
Sport Stressors	A stressful situation is one where you might feel anxious or worried. It might include feelings of butterflies in your stomach or sweaty palms, etc. What situations are stressful for you as a coach in basketball? What situations are perceived as stressful for your athletes? What differences are there in the way you appraise stressful situations as opposed to your athletes?	How stressful was each situation for you (on a scale of one to ten, where one is not stressful at all and ten is most stressful, how would you rate it?) What was stressful about it? Are there any other stressful situations you have experienced in sport?
Life Stressors	Can you describe stressful situations for your athletes in school, family or other areas of life?	Do any of these stressful situations influence your athletes' sport performance?
Coping	How do your athletes deal with stressful situations in basketball? How effective would you say your athletes are in dealing with stressful situations? What differences exist in the ways athletes deal with stressful situations?	What have you thought/done to try and deal with this situation? Do you discuss stressors, or ways to deal with stress, with your athletes?
Future Temporal Orientation	Thinking ahead, what do you think will be stressful about the upcoming basketball season? How do you know that will be stressful for your athletes? Do the athletes plan ahead for things that might be stressful in basketball?	What is it about 'X' that makes you think it will be stressful? (Why do you think that will be stressful? What is it that tells you that might be a stressful situation for your athletes? If so, how do they try to plan ahead for stressful situation?
Social Network	Who helps your athletes cope with stressors?	
Follow-up	If your athletes were faced with a stressful situation in basketball, what would you say to them?	Is there anything you would tell them based on your own experiences?

Appendix 5.0. Coach post-season interview.

Area	Main Questions	Probe Questions
Goals	Did you achieve your goals for the season?	If yes, how do you think you achieved your goals? What did you think/do after you achieved your goals? If no, why do you think you didn't achieve your goals?
Sport Stressors	A stressful situation is one where you might feel anxious or worried. It might include feelings of butterflies in your stomach or sweaty palms, etc. What situations were stressful for you as a coach in basketball this season? What situations were perceived as stressful for your athletes this season? (use audio-diary information if necessary) What differences are there in the way you appraised stressful situations as opposed to your athletes?	How stressful was each situation for you (on a scale of one to ten, where one is not stressful at all and ten is most stressful, how would you rate it?) What was stressful about it? Were there any other stressful situations you have experienced this season?
Life Stressors	Can you describe any stressful situations for your athletes in school, family or other areas of life which occurred this season?	Did any of these stressful situations influence your athletes' sport performance this season?
Coping	How did your athletes attempt to deal with 'X' situation (use their example)? Did they try anything to deal with the stressor which perhaps did not make the situation better? Would you say they were effective in dealing with that situation? Can you think of anything positive that came out of that situation?	What did they do to try and deal with this situation? If so, what did they do next? If so, what is it that made their coping efforts effective? If not, what was ineffective about their coping efforts? If yes, do you think that make it easier to cope with the stressful situation?
Future Temporal Orientation	Thinking about the stressors your athletes faced during the season, do you think they expected to face those situations before they happened?	If yes, why did they expect to face those stressors? If no, what was unexpected about those stressors? How did they know it would be stressful? What did they do, knowing that those stressors would arise? If the athletes had known those stressors would arise, what do you think they would have done to deal with them?
Photo Elicitation	Now I'm going to show you some pictures of situations in games and practices. For each photo, I want you to tell me how stressful the situation was for you/the team and how you/the team dealt with the situation.	Use same questions from stress/coping section above.
Social Network	When your athletes were faced with a stressful event, did they seek advice from anyone? Do your athletes come to you for advice?	Who did they seek advice from? Did seeking advice help your athletes to cope with the stressful event?

Follow-up	Do your athletes deal with stressful situations differently now compared to the beginning of the season? If someone you knew was faced with a stressful situation in basketball, what would you say to them?	How is their coping different from the beginning of the season to now? What do they do differently? Is there anything you would tell them based on your experiences this season?

Appendix 6.0. Summary of athlete profiles.

Proactive Coping	P3	Personal performance was a recurring stressor during the season due to high personal expectations. She coped consistently and effectively with her stressors by using instrumental action during games/practices and then using planning and strategizing after games/practices. She learned from ineffective coping efforts and knew how to cope with potential stressors in the future.
	P5	Reported few stressors during the season. Coped by planning ahead for potentially stressful situations and used problem solving and cognitive restructuring. Demonstrated an awareness of her coping efforts and maintained a positive attitude to cope with potential stressors.
	P6	Most frequently recurring stressor was personal performance. Attempted to cope by using problem solving, information seeking, acceptance, and rumination. Rumination was not an effective coping strategy. When her coping was ineffective, she demonstrated an awareness of her stressors and coping attempts and used planning/strategizing to cope effectively in the future.
Exploratory Coping	P1	Most frequently reported stressor was coach criticism. She reported inconsistent coping attempts during the season which included the use of mental withdrawal, helplessness, and emotional expression. She said that she had developed an awareness of her coping efforts and would engage in cognitive restructuring in the future when coping with stressors.
	P2	Initially reported coping ineffectively with recurring performance stressors and role confusion by using helplessness, rumination and opposition. Began using information seeking and cognitive restructuring which resulted in effective coping.
	P4	Playing time was a recurring stressor during the season. She attempted to cope with it by using distraction and cognitive restructuring, which were ineffective for her. Coping changes included the use acceptance and problem solving to improve her performance and thus try and increase her playing time.
	P8	Playing time and role confusion accounted for over 50% of her reported stressors. She initially coped effectively with playing time by using acceptance. Then, when she began to report playing time as well as role confusion as stressors she explored using delegation which was an ineffective coping strategy. By the end of the season she reported coping effectively with her stressors by using acceptance, mental withdrawal, and cognitive restructuring. As such, she explored different types of coping strategies to deal with the same primary stressor before deciding upon strategies that she perceived to be more effective.

Summary of Athlete Profiles (continued)

Exploratory Coping (continued)	P9	Recurring stressors included lack of confidence, coach criticism, playing time, and role confusion. Ineffective coping at the beginning of the season included information seeking, opposition, emotional regulation, helplessness and support seeking. Changes in coping which were effective included the use of using cognitive restructuring, mental withdrawal, and acceptance.
	P10	Recurring stressor was personal performance, but by the end of the season it included team dynamics (coach criticism and role confusion), pressure to perform, lack of confidence, and playing time. Coped inconsistently throughout the season, using emotional regulation and rumination (ineffective) and cognitive restructuring and acceptance (effective). She said that she learned which strategies would be effective for her in the future.
	P11	Used range of coping strategies to cope with playing time and role confusion. Ineffective coping attempts included problem solving, emotional expression, helplessness, opposition and distraction. Effective coping attempts included using cognitive restructuring and acceptance.
	P12	Recurring stressors included team dynamics and role confusion. She was consistently ineffective in her coping attempts, which included the use of emotional expression, escape, support seeking, and helplessness. In her post-season interview she said that she felt that she learned from her coping efforts and would use more information seeking strategies in the future to deal with her stressors.
	P13	Reported in pre-season interview that she typically used opposition and delegation to cope with interpersonal stressors. By the end of the season, she said she used mental withdrawal, acceptance, cognitive restructuring and information seeking to cope more effectively with her stressors.
Reactive Coping	P7	Recurring stressors related to interpersonal stressors and team performance. She used behavioural avoidance, helplessness, mental withdrawal, instrumental action, planning and strategizing, and emotional/behavioural regulation in reaction to her stressors. Instrumental action and behavioural regulation were effective strategies in coping with her stressors, but she did not change from ineffective to more effective strategies.

Appendix 7.0. Athlete idiographic profiles.

Proactive Coping

Idiographic Profile for P5. P5 was a graduating player and one of the team captains. She had two distinct goals for the season; she said "definitely like to um, to make it to the city championships and to provincials … Um, personally, uh like get recruited [to college/university]" (pre-season interview). When asked if she anticipated any potential stressors for the season, she said:

> I don't know. [pause] Um, hard games, big league games … usually when we play [rival team] it's stressful. They rattle you. Playing [team], there's a couple friends on the team and so … [and] expectations. And like um, the people who are watching.

P5 said she did plan ahead for potentially stressful situations by using visualization before games. In fact, during the season, over half of P5's audio diary entries contained reports of not experiencing any stressors at all in her. She was also the only athlete who did not report playing time as a stressor at any point during the season, despite the fact that her playing time decreased and she moved from a starting spot on the team to a non-starting position (she played 489 minutes over the course of the season).

On one occasion in the first half of the season where she did report stressors in her audio diary, P5 said that she had a lack of confidence and concerns about her personal performance in games:

Table A2. Coping for P5: No recurring stressors.

	December 13	January 8	Post-Season Interview
Stressors	*Lack of Confidence* "I don't know how to get there for like every game and that's what everyone keeps telling me, the only thing I lack is confidence, that's it."	*No Stressors* "It was a really good practice, I thought."	"I don't really focus on the stressor itself I'm just like, I don't know. The initial appraisal of the stressor, I don't, I'm not, I don't really think about it."
Coping Strategies	*Planning/Strategizing* *Cognitive Restructuring* "I'm trying to build my confidence by, you know, keep telling myself my role, I'm a shooter, I'm good … you just change the way you think, cause it's just what you do, so, you have to be conscious about what you're thinking."	*Planning/Strategizing* *Cognitive Restructuring* "All you got to do is be prepared, right, and you won't stress. Same with games you know? As long as you're prepared and you visualize, I think it goes a lot better, lots better."	*Positive Mindset* "I'm just like okay, so even if it's difficult to deal with, nothing I can't overcome."
Outcomes	*Effective* "I can't blame anything, I just gotta make the effort."		*Effective* "Going as far as I can you know and like putting in work like, it's my work that pays off right. Whether it pays off next year, like by getting playing time, or once I make it into college you know. It's going to pay off somewhere."

> I guess, there's a little bit of stress right now, I don't, yeah, I guess it's stress. Cause like, I don't know, like, like the guys' coach or whatever, like, keeps talking to me right, cause like, I go to shoot every morning and he's, keeps telling me you know, like, I have everything physical, it's just everything that's between the ears now you know, it's all mental. And like, I haven't, um, how do I say like, like, I've been to the place where it's like, you don't even think, it's unconscious, right? Like, you just cash it, you know, I've been there. But like, I don't, I'm not sure how to get there, you know like I just get there sometimes. But like, I don't know how to get there for like every game and that's what everyone keeps telling me, the only thing I lack is confidence, that's it. (December 13, post-practice).

In the same audio diary entry, P5 demonstrated an awareness of her stressors and said that she used planning/strategizing as well as cognitive restructuring in order to cope with them:

> I'm trying to build my confidence by, you know, keep telling myself my role, 'I'm a shooter, I'm good,' like, I don't know. Seriously, like, I don't know. I have everything physical, it's all mental, I just don't … but I think it's physical, but it, but it's not, so, I can't blame anything … But it's hard, you just change the way you think, cause it's just what you do, so, you have to be conscious about what you're thinking. (December 13, post-practice).

For P5, it seems that her awareness of her stressors and coping attempts had been gained from prior experience playing basketball. She said that the previous year was very different for her in regards to the way she coped with stressors:

> I don't know like last year like sometimes I like started to cry and stuff I get so, I don't know, it's just, I don't know, it just hurts … Last year I didn't have a very good season … I let everything get to me and I was like, 'ahhhh, like I didn't play this game.' 'Ah, I got to miss that game.' 'Ah, I suck, why do I try in practice, I'm not getting anything out of it.' (Pre-season interview).

P5 said that in her previous season, she took time to think about her performance and in talking with another coach she learned how to use cognitive restructuring in order to cope effectively with her stressors:

> He stopped me at a tournament cause he had a summer team too and um, talked to me for like two hours … [he told me] that like, it's not about [coach] you know, it's not really about [the team], it's about my game, advancing to the next level you know, going as far as I can you know and like putting in work like, it's my work that pays off right. Whether it pays off next year, like by getting playing time, or once I make it into college you know. It's going to pay off somewhere. (Post-season interview).

P5 maintained a positive mindset throughout the season and a conviction that her preparation and her efforts would pay off eventually, which may be one reason why she reported so few stressors in her audio diary entries. In a mid-season audio diary entry, P5 reflected on her school and basketball stressors and said that:

> Um, and, all you got to do is be prepared, right, and you won't stress. Same with games you know? As long as you're prepared and you visualize, I think it goes a lot better. I know it's coming. It's not a shock, you're not standing there going 'What the hell's going on?' You know? So, that's where I'm coming from. (January 8, post-practice).

P5 indicated that for her, having a positive mindset was key in coping with potentially stressful situations. During the post-season interview, when presented with a framework of proactive coping (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997), she said:

> I don't really focus on the stressor itself I'm just like, I don't know. The initial appraisal of the stressor, I don't, I'm not, I don't really think about it. I'm just like okay, so even if it's difficult to deal with, nothing I can't overcome. (Post-season interview).

Teammates also recognized P5 as having a positive attitude towards her sport, and it seemed that P5 was a source of support for her teammates when they were attempting to cope with stressors. P6 said that she would seek support from P5 on a regular basis throughout the season: "Um, I'd normally would talk to [P5], cause, I think actually a lot of people would go to [her] because she's so easy to talk to and would just help you out with it and she's really positive too" (P6, post-season interview). Similarly, P2 reported that she would seek advice from P5 when she was experiencing performance stressors:

> During the time I wasn't playing a lot … like, to give myself confidence, I just, I went and talked to [P5] and I was like, I had like an hour and a half talk with her and we just sat there and like talked about my basketball and stuff like that and stuff that I do. And I remember like after that

> conversation with her I was like wow, and then, I knew I had to give myself confidence or else I wouldn't play good. (P2, post-season interview).

Not only did P5 appear to cope effectively with her stressors throughout the season, she also assisted her teammates in coping by talking with them about strategies such as cognitive restructuring and staying positive. When asked about her role as a captain on the team and the team's dynamics over the season, P5 said:

> I seem to have like, a growing perspective of what happened. I wasn't expecting like so many people to feel that open with me. So that was … I think it brought me closer to a lot of people, I don't know, off the court so then it would be easier on the court. (Post-season interview).

Overall, P5 said that her coping did not change over the course of the season. She reported few stressors in her audio diary entries and said that she maintained a positive attitude when it came to coping with potentially stressful situations. Her positive attitude, combined with the use of cognitive restructuring, planning/strategizing and an awareness of her coping efforts, enabled P5 to cope effectively with stressors she encountered during the season and to help her teammates in coping with their stressors as well.

Idiographic Profile for P6. P6 was a graduating player and played several sports in high school, including volleyball, rugby, handball and soccer. Her playing time totalled 593 minutes during the season. She anticipated that the season would be her last playing basketball, as volleyball was her main sport. In fact at the end of the season, P6 was recruited to play volleyball at the college level. P6's goals for the basketball season were not career-oriented, but rather she was focused on a positive overall experience.

Table A1. Coping for P6: Personal performance.

	November 30	December 5	February 10	February 17
Stressors	*Personal Performance* "I had trouble finishing a bit again, and it is kind of frustrating when I can't make those easy shots."	*Personal Performance* *Anxiety* "I was having trouble with my defence in the post, um, I was kind of nervous too, because it was the first game, so it was an expected stressor, just because it was a first game."	*Personal Performance* "In today's game I, yeah I couldn't finish a shot huh. It's really annoying. "	*Personal Performance* "My finishing in scrimmaging again. It was kind of off. "
Coping Strategies	*Rumination* *Planning/Strategizing* "I kind of let it get to me a bit and threw off my game a bit." "I have to push it aside and think positively."	*Asking Others* "To deal with these stressors, I asked [coach] what to do was best."	*Instrumental Action* *Acceptance* "[I] worked really hard at other things like my D and re, rebounds and stuff so … my shooting was a little off but oh well. It's not always going to be perfect."	*Rumination* *Planning/Strategizing* "I keep thinking about it and then, keep making the same mistakes … I just have to play like really good defence and I'm going to focus on soft shots and not rushing, taking my time, make sure it goes in."
Outcomes	*Ineffective* "In our scrimmage I wasn't doing as well … if I keep letting this um get to me, then I will … not be very confident in myself and have trouble finishing all the time."	*Effective* "For the second half I picked it up and I played a lot better, so I was effective in dealing with it."	*Effective* "I thought I was … effective in dealing with it."	*Ineffective* "I wasn't too effective with it today … I know what I have to fix."

She said in her pre-season interview that "[It's] probably going to be my last basketball season ever so to have fun and I really want to um improve, obviously get better throughout the season."

The only stressors P6 predicted for the upcoming season were life stressors (schoolwork) and her personal performance. She said in her pre-season interview that "I guess sometimes in practices if I'm having trouble finishing, um that can really annoy me." This was supported by her audio diary entries, as over one-third of her reported stressors related to her personal performance. Early in the season she said:

> Today I had trouble finishing a bit again, and it is kind of frustrating when I can't make those easy shots, um, they were kind of unexpected because um, warm-up, or, in shooting practice at lunch I was shooting really well, so it's frustrating I can't do that in a game, or in scrimmages. (November 30, post-practice).

In this particular situation, P6 reported ruminating over her stressor, saying "I kind of let it get to me a bit and threw off my game a bit" (November 30, post-practice). Her coping was ineffective, however she reported an awareness of her coping efforts and ways in which she could cope more effectively in the future. She concluded her audio diary by saying "if I keep letting this um get to me, then I will you know, obviously not be very confident in myself and have trouble finishing all the time, so I have to push it aside and think positively" (November 30, post-practice).

In her next practice, P6 reported some further difficulties with her performance, saying "[the stressor] I faced was defence in the post and having a little trouble getting around. Um, it's kind of unexpected because normally defence is my strongest point"

(December 4, post-practice). This time to cope with her stressors, she used information seeking (asking others) as a coping strategy. She reported that "to deal with these stressors I asked a teammate what was the best thing to do, and they helped me out with that. Um, I thought I was pretty effective in dealing with this" (December 4, post-practice). In fact, she also used information seeking (asking others) to cope with performance stressors in a game the following day. She said in her audio diary that:

> In the first half I was having trouble with my defence in the post, um, I was kind of nervous too, because it was the first game, so it was an expected stressor, just because it was a first game. Um, to deal with these stressors, I asked [coach] what to do was best and for the second half I picked it up and I played a lot better, so I was effective in dealing with it. (December 5, post-game).

P6 also used instrumental action and acceptance when coping with her performance stressors. After a tournament game, she reported that "in today's game I, yeah I couldn't finish a shot huh. It's really annoying" (February 10, post-game). In order to cope with her stressor, she said:

> To deal with these stressors I, yeah just worked really hard at other things like my D and rebounds and stuff so. Um, so I thought I was, yeah I really effective in dealing with it. Just, yeah my shooting was a little off but oh well. It's not always going to be perfect. (February 10, post-game).

By using instrumental action to focus on working hard and making rebounds, and by accepting that her performance would not always be perfect, P6 was able to cope effectively with her stressors.

One week after she coped effectively with her performance stressors by using instrumental action and acceptance, she reported the same stressor again, saying "stressors in today um, just my finishing in scrimmaging again. It was kind of off" (February 17, post-practice). She said that during the practice "it's just kind of frustrating because I keep, it keeps bugging me and I keep thinking about it and then I don't do as well obviously." Although rumination did not help her to cope with her performance stressor, she demonstrated an awareness of her coping attempts and used planning/strategizing in order to cope with future stressors. She concluded by saying:

> I obviously won't do as well because I keep thinking about it and then, keep making the same mistakes. So it never helps my confidence with it at all. But um, I just have to play like really good defence and I'm going to focus on soft shots and not rushing, taking my time, make sure it goes in … the bright side is that I guess you can see how important confidence is and I know that I, I know what I have to fix in order to raise my confidence. (February 17, post-practice).

Throughout the season, P6 reported that personal performance was a recurring stressor for her. She said in her post-season interview that her coping did not change and that "I basically stay[ed] the same." Over the course of the season, P6 coped consistently with her stressors by using information seeking (asking others), instrumental action, acceptance, and rumination. In instances where she used rumination to cope she reported that she was ineffective, however she then reported using planning/strategizing in order to cope effectively with future stressors.

Exploratory Coping

Idiographic Profile for P2. P2 was a grade 11 player whose goals for the season were "to get a better vertical and … to be a consistent player" (pre-season interview). She accumulated 472.5 minutes of playing time during the season. In her audio diary entries, P2 was concerned with her ability to help the team on the court and consequently felt that she was under pressure to perform throughout the season. In fact, pressure to perform and role confusion accounted for over one-third of P2's reported stressors in her audio diary data. In her first audio diary entry, she said:

> I made some mistakes … I just, my head wasn't in it, I was angry, so then I came off, and I don't think I was ready to go back on when I was put back on, and I didn't say anything, and I played angry and I caused a lot of problems. (December 15, post-game).

P2 said that because of her performance in that game, "I feel really bad … I have a lot of guilt right now about stuff, about my playing and I really feel like I really let down the team" (December 15, post-game). She reported using rumination in her attempt to cope with her stressors, saying "I'm just like really beating myself up right now, which really sucks." Rumination was ineffective in coping with her stressors, but she demonstrated some awareness of her coping efforts and indicated that she would try other coping strategies in the future. She concluded her audio diary by saying:

> I'm not doing a really good job of it [coping] right now, but I'm trying and I'm going to go talk to one of the captains about it and I'm going to figure it out and hopefully I'll feel better when I figure it out. (December 15, post-game).

Table A5. Coping for P2: Personal performance.

	December 15	December 21	Post-Season Interview
Stressors	*Personal Performance* *Pressure to Perform* "I really feel, like, I really let down the team."	*Team Performance* *Role confusion* "I thought our game was absolutely pathetic … I don't feel part of the team."	*Personal Performance* "I felt I was doing all I could, and like, all that was being asked of me, and it still wasn't good enough, and for me that's really frustrating."
Coping Strategies	*Rumination* "I'm kind of beating myself up about it right now."	*Helplessness* *Opposition* "I want to quit basketball."	*Asking Others* *Cognitive Restructuring* "I think [talking to coach] helped a lot with that … she started like telling me what I needed to do better."
Outcomes	*Ineffective* "I have a lot of guilt right now about stuff, about my playing."	*Ineffective*	*Effective* "[coach] really helped me out with that."

In her next audio dairy entry, P2 reported stressors related to the team's performance in their most recent game in which she felt unable to help the team to secure a win. As a result, she was doubting her role as a player on the team and said:

> I was pissed off for a lot of the game … After this game I want to quit basketball, that is how I feel. That is how I'm dealing with this, because it's bull … I don't feel part of the team, and … but you know what, whatever. (December 21, post-game).

In her post-season interview, P2 elaborated on this game, saying that her stressor of role confusion was tied to a lack of playing time during that game. She said:

> I thought about that and I played like, probably, like, I thought it was one of my best games ever … but then, I didn't play for the rest of the game … I didn't feel appreciated, I didn't feel like she [coach] cared and it was like, I got mad cause I tried my hardest and I did what I felt was my best and I know I was doing good, and I still didn't get the chance to go out and do it again when I thought our team could really use it.

P2 said that she experienced a change in her coping as she began to seek information from the coaches concerning her performance. In her post-season interview she reflected on her performance, saying that at the beginning of the season she was:

> … stressed out because I didn't know what I could do to be better, and like, I felt I was doing all I could, and like, all that was being asked of me, and it still wasn't good enough … that was really stressful for me at the beginning of the season. But I think [coach] helped a lot with that, cause towards the end of the season, and like through the middle of the season

> she started like telling me what I needed to do better and like, what she expected of me and stuff like that so I think that was, that really helped me out with that.

P2 reported that in addition to seeking information from the coaches, she also used cognitive restructuring to cope effectively with her stressors. She said that by the end of the season:

> … I just told myself that no matter what happens, like, do your best. Cause that's the best you can do … as long as I think that I did the best, and like I know I pushed myself as hard as I could go, then it was ok and I did a good job. (Post-season interview).

P2 reported that personal performance was a recurring stressor, although at times it was reported concurrently with pressure to perform, role confusion, and team performance. To cope with her stressors she explored a range of coping strategies which included rumination, helplessness, opposition, asking others and cognitive restructuring. She reported coping effectively with her stressors by the end of the season.

Idiographic profile for P4. P4 was a grade 11 athlete who identified herself as a non-starting player on the team and made personal improvement a goal for the season. She played 466.5 minutes during the season. She said in her pre-season interview that she wanted to "just get a lot better … just improve my like, knowledge of the game." She anticipated that team dynamics and losing would be stressful for her, however in her audio diary entries playing time was the most frequently reported stressor, accounting for 20% of her reported stressors over the course of the season.

Table A3. Coping for P4: Playing time and role confusion.

	January 26	February 10	February 20	February 26	Post-Season Interview
Stressors	*Playing Time* "Playing only about one minute in the first half and four in the second … they were kind of unexpected because I didn't really expect to be sitting on the bench."	*Playing Time* *Role confusion* "It was really, really stressful for me because I missed most half … I thought it was a pretty good job … But apparently that wasn't good enough."	*Pity Time* *Role confusion* "I got played like a minute in the first half and thirty seconds of pity time at the very end of the second half … I still have no frickin idea what the hell I did wrong in the first place to be where I am."	*Playing Time* "I still wasn't getting lots of play time."	*Playing Time* *Role confusion* "I didn't expect getting benched would be stressful."
Coping Strategies	*Distraction* "I kind of just tried to cheer more on the bench."	*Cognitive Restructuring* *Distraction* "I just tried to keep cheering for my other teammates and be happy for everyone else."	*Cognitive Restructuring* "I just kept trying to see a positive in what everyone else was doing."	*Problem Solving* "I've been shooting in the mornings so I'm less stressed."	*Problem Solving* *Acceptance* "Instead of just brushing them [stressors] off, I'd come up with like, new strategies."
Outcomes	*Ineffective* "I'm still very stressed out about it and mad, so I guess it didn't really help."	*Ineffective* "I didn't deal with it really well because um, I'm still mad about it after it."	*Ineffective* "I wasn't really effective cause I'm still pissed off about it."	*Effective* "I had a really, really good practice and she [coach] told me, 'Welcome back,' so that was really good."	*Effective* "I want our team to win, so I'm just not even going to worry about play time."

Playing time was first reported as a stressor for P4 in her audio diary of January 26 following a game in which she did not play much. She said that it was "kind of unexpected because I didn't really expect to be sitting on the bench." In order to cope with this stressor, she said "I kind of just tried to cheer more on the bench … I wasn't very effective because I'm still very stressed out about it and mad, so I guess it didn't really help" (January 26, post-game). For P4, distraction was not effective in coping with her lack of playing time.

Two weeks later, P4 reported playing time as well as role confusion as stressors in a tournament game. In her February 10 audio diary she said:

> It was really, really stressful for me because I missed most [of the] half … [I was] given not much playtime … there's no point in me being in, it's just pity time … I was guarding the star player on the other team and I did, I thought it was a pretty good job … But apparently that wasn't good enough. (Post-game).

To cope with her stressors, she said that "I just tried to keep cheering for my other teammates and be happy for everyone else. And I didn't deal with it really well because um, I'm still mad about it" (February 10, post-game). Combining cognitive restructuring (being happy for everyone else) and distraction (cheering for teammates) were not effective for P4 in coping with the stressors of playing time and role confusion.

The next report of playing time and role confusion as stressors occurred 10 days later, after a game against a rival team. P4 said in her audio diary entry:

> I didn't get played. I got played like a minute in the first half and thirty seconds of pity time at the very end of the second half and that was just

> really stressful cause I still have no frickin idea what the hell I did wrong in the first place to be where I am. (February 20, post-game).

Again, P4 attempted to cope by using cognitive restructuring which was ineffective for her. She said:

> I just kept trying to see a positive in what everyone else was doing but I wasn't really effective cause I tried but it really didn't work … I'm not like being cocky but I know I should be out there like … more than like thirty seconds a half … like when I used to be a starter and stuff … it's just really, really stressful. So I wasn't really effective cause I'm still pissed off about it. (February 20, post-game).

In her next audio diary P4 that she "still wasn't getting lots of playtime" (February 26, post-practice) and she reported using problem solving to cope with her stressor. She said that during the practice "I picked up my slack and on Friday I, I had a really, really good practice and she [coach] told me, 'Welcome back,' so that was really good." In the same audio diary entry, she said "I've been shooting in the mornings so I'm less stressed … it just makes me feel better about it." In her post-season interview, P1 said "when I started to get benched I was like, well I gotta do, like, something, because yeah. You gotta try." By using problem solving to work on her shooting and her performance, P4 said that she felt she improved her playing time toward the end of the season, however she also said:

> I think I still could have done even better, like, I started coming in the mornings, I started doing that near the middle of the season. I could have

> done that more near the beginning, and like, before the season and stuff like that. (Post-season interview).

As noted earlier, P4 did not anticipate that playing time would be a stressor for her during the season. In fact, she said that playing time only became a stressor for her after an improvement in her performance had earned her a starting position on the team. In her post-season interview, she said:

> I didn't expect getting benched would be stressful, cause I went into the season thinking that I would not get play time at all, [but] then I ended up being able to work my way up [to a starting position] and I didn't expect the stressor of working my way up and then getting completely benched.

When playing time was first reported as a stressor, P4 attempted to cope with her stressors by using distraction and cognitive restructuring, which were ineffective for her. By the end of the season, P4 said that she had experienced a change in her coping by exploring the use of problem solving and accommodation. In her post-season interview, she said:

> I think like, at the beginning I didn't really know at all like, how to deal with stuff. And then like at the end … I was like, it's ok, it's provincials. Like, I want to do really good, I want our team to win, so I'm just not even going to worry about play time … I just kind of had to like, figure out how to deal with it, so like, instead of just brushing [it] off, I'd come up with like, new strategies. Like forgetting about it, or just like, thinking that like, other people are like supposed to be out there.

Idiographic Profile for P8. P8 was a grade 11 non-starting athlete who anticipated that she would not get a lot of playing time during the season. Indeed, she played 155.5 minutes during the season. She said that she goal for the season was:

> Mainly like just to improve cause I know, I know where I stand on the team and I know I'm not the best player. And I'm not going to get a lot of playing time, so I'm not going to be upset if I don't always go in. I just want to improve and be the best that I can be, even if it's not for the team, it's for myself. (Pre-season interview).

Although P8 anticipated that playing time would not be a stressor for her, it accounted for over 40% of her reported stressors in her audio diary entries. Early in the season, she reported that playing time was a stressor for her in a tournament game, but that she coped effectively with it, saying "usually I'm pretty good at dealing with my not playing because I know it's coming, so I prepare myself" (December 15, post-game).

The next report of playing time as a stressor for P8 also included the stressor of role confusion. In her audio diary of January 18, she said "today in practice I didn't get to play, which is weird because usually most players get to play in practice ... I kind of don't feel any more desire to be working hard" (post-practice). To cope with her stressors, P8 reported that she used delegation, saying "I bitched about my coach to deal with these, to my friends ... um, not very effective." So, although she said in her pre-season interview that playing time would not be a stressor for her, she actually did find that it was a stressor when she was not able to participate fully in practices as well as games, which led her to question her value as a member of the team.

Table A4. Coping for P8: Playing time and role confusion.

	December 15	January 18	January 24	March 8 & Post-Season Interview
Stressors	*Playing Time* "Not playing was definitely expected."	*Playing Time* *Role confusion* "Today in practice I didn't get to play, which is weird because usually most players get to play in practice … I kind of don't feel any more desire to be working hard."	*Playing Time* *Role confusion* "I didn't play at all basically in practice and you think that someone in practice would get playing time."	*Pity Time* "Getting pity time … I never play."
Coping Strategies	*Acceptance* "Usually I'm pretty good at dealing with my not playing because I know it's coming, so I prepare myself."	*Delegation* "I bitched about my coach to deal with these to my friends."	*Delegation* "To deal with these stressors I bitched."	*Acceptance* *Mental Withdrawal* *Cognitive Restructuring* "I've kind of stopped caring." "I was just ready to let everything go and just like, be happy with myself."
Outcomes	*Effective* "I was effective in dealing with these because I don't really feel stressed."	*Ineffective* "Not very effective."	*Ineffective* "I was not very effective in dealing with these stressors."	*Effective* "It was very effective because it didn't really bug me."

Less than a week later, P8 reported playing time and role confusion as stressors again, saying that increased tension between herself and her teammate added to her doubts about her role on the team. She said in her January 26 audio diary that "I didn't play at all basically in practice and you think that someone in practice would get playing time" (post-practice). In her post-season interview, she said that during this time in the season:

> It was basically just like some of the starting players, um they would just be like, 'Why is the bench going on?' and if I said something I was like, 'oh well I'm a bench player you shouldn't be saying that to me,' they'd be like, 'Well it's true' ... I just felt like useless and untrusted by my team.

P8 said that to cope with her stressors "I bitched about [teammates] and it obviously didn't work ... I was not very effective in dealing with these stressors because I didn't, I still feel mad" (January 26, post-practice). Again, using delegation and venting to others about her stressors was not an effective coping strategy for this athlete.

Toward the end of the season, P8 reported a change in her coping efforts. In an audio diary following a game in which she only played a few minutes, she said:

> Not playing was expected because I never play and it was [rival team]. So to deal with the stressors, well personally for me, they didn't really stress me out because I've kind of stopped caring and it's the end of the season so I just sat there and listened to everyone bitch. It didn't really bug me. It was very effective because it didn't really bug me. (March 8, post-game).

By using acceptance and mental withdrawal, P8 said that she was more effective in coping with her stressors. She also described her change in coping in her post-season

interview, where she said "I think I kind of just got like sick of everything that was going on so I was just ready to let everything go and just like, be happy with myself." P8 also said that her lack of playing time:

> ... was upsetting at times ... [early in the season] usually I just bitched about it. Um, usually I just kind of brush things off now and don't let them bug me ... Like I mean I still do [bitch about it] now but it's more for the purpose of my own enjoyment and gossiping than [to] actually deal with anything cause nothing really bugs me anymore. (Post-season interview).

Over the course of the season, P8 reported that playing time and role on time were recurring stressors for her. She initially coped effectively with her stressor of playing time by using acceptance, but as the season progressed she explored other (ineffective) coping strategies. By the end of the season, she reported using acceptance as well as mental withdrawal and cognitive restructuring to cope effectively with her stressors.

Idiographic Profile for P9. P9 was a graduating player and one of the captains on the team. She had a starting position on the team as a guard player. She played 945 minutes during the season, the highest on the team. In her pre-season interview, she said that goals for her included getting recruited to play at the college or university level, as well as to "improve my confidence. I think a lot actually. Improve just like um, really like finishing like because I would finish my game and then like fold ... I'd be missing that little confidence" (pre-season interview).

Early in the season, the athlete's confidence was negatively influenced by coach criticism. At one practice, P9 was observed becoming upset by the coaches. Reflecting on

Table A10. Coping for P9: Coach criticism.

	Early December	December-January	February
Stressors	*Lack of Confidence* *Coach Criticism* *Playing Time* "The ongoing ah like bashing of my, everything, confidence, emotional feelings, everything from my coaches."	*Coach Criticism* *Role confusion* *Lack of Confidence* "It wasn't even about basketball anymore it was just basically about bashing me as a person … she told me that I should leave and that she would sign my papers and that she would have no problem with me handing in my jersey."	*Coach Criticism* "Just little things like, 'That was horrible,' or, 'That wasn't a good play,' basically just completely negative and it's extremely stressful and emotionally draining."
Coping Strategies	*Emotional Regulation* *Asking Others* *Opposition* "At first I wasn't saying anything and I was just keeping it to myself … [then] I just was like that's absolutely unacceptable and so I said something and as soon as you say something they go on power struggles, whatever."	*Emotional Expression* *Support Seeking* *Helplessness* *Cognitive Restructuring* "I went home that night and threw up, I was bawling … if my best friend wasn't on the team, like I don't think, like I don't think I'd still have come back. Like I wouldn't, if it wasn't for the girls, I wouldn't have come back"	*Cognitive Restructuring* *Acceptance* *Mental Withdrawal* "I just did what I always do. I shut her out and just try to do my own thing and just stay positive with myself."
Outcomes	*Ineffective* "She benched me another game."	*Effective* "I know I'm an important part of that team as much as she [coach] said I wasn't."	*Effective* "I think after that, that part I just, just finally decided to screw that. I said I'm just going to, I'm just going to do what I got to do for myself."

this period of time, P9 described her stressors as "the ongoing ah like bashing of my, everything, confidence, emotional feelings everything from my coaches" (post-season interview).

To cope with the criticism from her coaches, P9 said that "at first I wasn't saying anything and I was just keeping it to myself" (post-season interview) but that after a few games in which she did not get much playing time and perceived further criticism by the coaches, she sought information from her coaches without much success: "[coach] started benching me and I just was like that's absolutely unacceptable and so I said something and as soon as you say something they go on power struggles, whatever" (post-season interview). P9 may have perceived her approach as seeking information, but said that: "[coach] was just being absolutely rude to me so I was like, 'okay well am I playing tomorrow?' So I asked her, you know 'am I starting tomorrow?'" (post-season interview). Indeed, one teammate described P9's information seeking strategy as actions as more defiant and oppositional:

> She [P9] like bursts right now like at the beginning of it, so the only way it can go is bad because of the things she's said and done. So like it's kind of almost too late for her but like I've, I'm trying to like tell her like to calm down kind of and like it will be okay in like two weeks … like if you keep saying the things you're saying to [coach] and keep like not having good leadership and like showing then it is going to get worse. (P1, pre-season interview).

P9 described her efforts at asking others and emotional regulation as ineffective, as her playing time continued to decrease and she perceived further criticism from her

coaches. Soon after her first meeting with the coaches, P9 met with them again to discuss her playing time and again reported the stressors of coach criticism which also included doubting her role on the team. She said:

> It wasn't even about basketball anymore it was just basically about bashing me as a person … She told me that I should leave and that she would sign my papers and that she would have no problem with me handing in my jersey. (Post-season interview).

Following this meeting, P9 attempted to cope with her stressors by using a range of coping strategies including emotional expression, helplessness, support seeking. She reported that:

> I took that, like bad, bad like I went home that night and threw up, I was bawling, like it was like probably the worst, worst night of the season. And I yeah, so and I got all my stuff ready, I put all my uniforms in a bag and I just, I said that's it … I just wasn't sure if I wanted to do it [quit] yet and I just didn't want to, I didn't want to like to leave the girls was, it also, if my best friend [name] wasn't on the team, like I don't think, like I don't think I'd still have come back. Like I wouldn't, if it wasn't for the girls, I wouldn't have come back. So I didn't want to leave the girls. (Post-season interview).

Following this incident, P9 began to use more cognitive restructuring in coping with the criticism she perceived from her coaches. For example, one technique she used was to think: "I know I'm an important part of that team as much as she said I wasn't" (post-season interview).

The stressors of perceived coach criticism, a lack of confidence, and her role on the team were recurrent throughout the season. Toward the end of the year, P9 recorded an audio diary entry in which she said that her stressor was:

> How [coach] was treating me. Um, just little things like, 'That was horrible,' or, 'That wasn't a good play,' or basically just completely negative and it's extremely stressful and emotionally draining when she's constantly telling me like how, you know, how bad I'm doing … So that's like my stress every game. (February 13, post-game).

However, by this point in the season the athlete reported the use of cognitive restructuring, acceptance, and mental withdrawal to cope effectively with her stressor. In her audio diary entry she said "it wasn't nearly as stressful as I thought it was going to be … basically I just did what I always do. I shut her out and just try to do my own thing and just stay positive with myself" (February 13, post-game). In her post-season interview, she said that her performance improved once she began using cognitive restructuring and acceptance in coping with her stressors:

> I think after that, that part I just, just finally decided, 'screw that.' I said 'I'm just going to, I'm just going to do what I got to do for myself' … I expected it more and more and just basically um, expecting it helped me get over it … Like you, you know, it just, so once you accept it, and expect it, it's not so much of a shock, right. At the beginning I was like, what the, like I was so shocked because I was like, what is going on. But then it helped just to … I just brushed it off. (Post-season interview).

P9 said that using acceptance and cognitive restructuring to cope with her stressors was effective, and that on the court "I started just shooting … [after that] I just, like scored so much more" (post-season interview). At the end of the season, P9 acknowledged a change in her coping and the way she reacted to stressors, and said

> I just don't think I would have got through the season if I wouldn't have dealt with it that way, like I definitely wouldn't have. So I would of just kept spazzing [breaking down] and then I just either would have got kicked off the team or I would have had to quit. (Post-season interview).

P9 reported coach criticism as a recurring stressor during the season, however she also reported lack of confidence, playing time and role confusion. This athlete's coping seemed to change as a result of her initial coping efforts which were ineffective. At the beginning of the season, P9 used coping strategies such as emotional regulation, asking others, and opposition, which she said did not help her to cope with the criticism she perceived or her performance on the court. As she started to explore using cognitive restructuring and acceptance in her coping attempts, she reported an improvement in her performance and in her confidence:

> It did like, it could have definitely crushed every single part of me, all my confidence like, and it did at some points and then I kind of just said like 'play for yourself like play and like come out every game and just play good.' So then I just did really well. (Post-season interview).

Idiographic profile for P10. In her pre-season interview, P10 reported having high personal standards for herself and for her teammates. She played 507 minutes during the season, and as a graduating player and a highly competitive athlete, she said:

Table A7. Coping for P10: Personal performance.

	November 29	December 1	December 6	January 11-18
Stressors	*Personal Performance* "Definitely I feel that um, myself individually am not performing at my level."	*Personal Performance* *Coach Criticism* "I was having trouble um, passing the ball and it was … I just had like a couple passes that were turnovers and they were just bad mistakes … Coach pulled me aside and … it kind of put me on the spot."	*Personal Performance* *Lack of Confidence* *Pressure to Perform* "I didn't perform how I usually perform … I think I have like a problem dealing with my confidence and I feel like I'm not good enough and I feel like I'm in grade 12 and I'm a senior on this team and I need to be a leader."	*Role confusion* *Playing Time* *Personal Performance* "I feel like, that I'm being like a bad leader, again, because [coach] said that we have no leaders on the team."
Coping Strategies	*Emotional Regulation* *Rumination* "It's hard for me to get out of that and just keep playing normally, and just shake it off, but, I can't do that cause I just hold it inside."	*Emotional Regulation* *Accommodation* "Keeping a calm head, if I go out there and I get frustrated it's only going to affect me more and I'm just going to keep doing the same things over again."	*Emotional Regulation* *Rumination* "I pretty much just sat there just watching our team do bad and just thinking about how bad I did. I don't know how to deal with it, I guess I don't really deal with it at all because I'm not changing and I'm just holding it inside."	*Problem Solving* *Cognitive Restructuring* "I need to be more vocal … I need to help the team … I was like, yeah, you know what, suck it up, go to practice, and like, work hard and feel good about something."
Outcomes	*Ineffective* "I just feel even worse about myself."	*Effective* "I dealt with it good."	*Ineffective* "I'm having trouble finding a solution."	*Effective* "I just did really, like, what I set out to do, I sucked it up and I had an awesome practice."

> I don't believe in like doing something just for the heck of doing it. Like if we're going to play basketball and if you're putting in, every day putting in a couple of hours and I'm always putting in my full [effort] and I expect that everybody else is too. (Pre-season interview).

She said that she anticipated her personal performance would be a stressor for her in the upcoming season: "For me more than like other players, I haven't been like performing. I haven't been stepping up in that area [performing], so, it's hard to deal with" (Pre-season interview). She also said during her pre-season interview that her goal was to be a leader on the team for her teammates to look up to:

> I just think we're going to have lots of highs and lows. I think it's going to be like roller coaster cause we have like, we have a strong team and we have potential but we're so inexperienced. And like that's going to be a big problem for us. And yeah, and like part of my like responsibilities cause I'm in grade 12 too now right, so I have to like, it's different being in it. Like cause looking up to the grade 12's and then where you are there you're like 'oh, okay I guess we gotta like step up now.' (Pre-season interview).

During the season over half of P10's audio diary entries related to her personal performance, coach criticism, or a lack of communication from the coach. In an early-season audio diary entry she said "Ah, definitely I feel that um, myself individually [I] am not performing at my level, so, I can see myself having more practices like this" (November 29, post-practice). In coping with this stressor, P10 said "it's hard for me to get out of that and just keep playing normally, and just shake it off, but, I can't do that

cause I just hold it inside" (November 29, post-practice). By thinking about the stressor and using emotional regulation to keep it inside, she ended up ruminating about it, which was an ineffective coping strategy. The next time P10 reported the stressor personal performance, it also included coach criticism. She said in her audio diary that:

> I was having trouble um, passing the ball … I just had like a couple passes that were turnovers and they were just bad mistakes. Coach pulled me aside and … it kind of put me on the spot. (December 1, post-practice).

In order to cope with her performance as well as the criticism from her coach, P10 said:

> I just nodded my head and I said, yup, you're right, I wouldn't, I shouldn't do that. So, that's how I dealt with it. And I'd say I dealt with it good because, just keeping a calm head, if I go out there and I get frustrated it's only going to affect me more and I'm just going to keep doing the same things over again. (December 1, post-practice).

P10's use of emotional regulation by keeping a calm head, combined with accommodation in accepting the coach's comments was an effective strategy in coping with her stressors. It appears that by using accommodation along with emotional regulation, she was more effective in coping with her performance stressor than when she used emotional regulation and rumination as coping strategies.

A few days later, P10 reported concerns about her performance which included perceived pressure to perform as well as lack of confidence. In her audio diary on December 6 she said:

> I didn't perform how I usually perform, and it was so frustrating because I wasn't doing the things that I needed to do, and I just ended up

> embarrassing myself even further … I think I have like a problem dealing with my confidence and I feel like I'm not good enough and I feel like I'm in grade 12 and I'm a senior on this team and I need to be a leader and I always have, like, I have all these high expectations of myself but I don't feel like my team has them of me. And I feel like I'm just always letting them down, like I'm never achieving what I want to achieve. (Post-game).

Despite having won the game she had just played, P10 was dissatisfied with her performance and said that she was not coping well with her stressors:

> I pretty much just sat there just watching our team do bad and just thinking about how bad I did. Um, to deal with this I just, I don't know, I don't know what I did to deal with it, I'm just angry, I … there's like, I don't know how to deal with it, I guess I don't really deal with it at all because I'm not changing and I'm just holding it inside. (December 6, post-game).

In this case, P10 reverted back to using emotional regulation to conceal her emotions from others and ruminating about her performance, which was not an effective coping strategy: "I want to be better and I want to be stronger, and I want to be all these things for my team, but, I'm having trouble finding a solution" (December 6, post-game).

Later in the season, P10 reported further dissatisfaction following a game which the team lost: "I feel like, that I'm being like a bad leader, again, because [coach] said that we have no leaders on the team" (January 11, post-game). This athlete's stressors of personal performance and her role on the team were closely tied to her view of herself as displaying leadership on the team, both on and off the court. In her audio diary entry of

January 11, she said that she used problem solving (planning and strategizing) in an attempt to cope with her stressor.

> I need to be more vocal … I need to help the team … So, I'm just going to re-write everything that I'm thinking right now and bring it to the meeting and hopefully we get some progress out of this because we need to clear this up and we need to get back on track.

The following audio diary entry revealed that her problem solving, combined with cognitive restructuring, resulted in P10 being very satisfied with her performance. She said she ended up having "one of the best practices I've had all year" (January 18, post-practice) and that she told herself before practice:

> You know what, suck it up, go to practice, and like, work hard and feel good about something. So I went to practice and I'm really happy I did because I worked really really hard and I came ready to work and like, at the end of it I was rewarded because I, we scrimmaged most of practice and you know, like, I just did really, like, what I set out to do. I sucked it up and I had an awesome practice. Like, I had great passes … I scored lots and I was just leading my team a lot. So, it was really rewarding and I felt really good. So, I was satisfied with today's performance and I think so long as I keep playing for myself and keep playing to keep myself happy that things will be ok. (January 18, post-practice).

In coping with her personal performance, her lack of confidence, and her role on the team, P10 explored a combination of cognitive responses (such as rumination or accommodation) and emotional responses (such as emotional regulation) that she

deployed over the course of the season. It seems that for P10, she appeared to cope most successfully with her stressors when she used some form of acceptance or cognitive restructuring, whereas rumination was not an effective coping strategy.

P10 indicated in her post season interview that she did not think her coping had changed much over the course of the season, however she did engage in more cognitive restructuring when coping with stressors related to her coaches or teammates:

> I don't know, I guess I just learned how to like deal with them … I just tried to like pick out the positives you know, like and what she says to me and stuff and yeah. (Post-season interview).

P10 said that learning about her coping attempts "helps me like just look at myself, cause like whenever I reflect or whatever and even like doing the audio diaries it just kind of made, makes you like, when you vocalize it, it makes you like actually think about like how you're dealing with it" (Post-season interview).

Idiographic Profile for P11. P11 was a grade 11 player who indicated in her pre-season interview that she did not consider herself to be a starting player on the team, and her goal for the season was "just sort of trying to improve and get better over the season. I don't have a specific goal or anything." Although P11 did not expect to play as much as the other players, she did indicate that playing time would be important to her. In total, she played 219 minutes during the season. She said that it was "really important [to get playing time]. Cause I don't want to, I don't want to sit on the bench all season." P11 said that she found her limited playing time to be a stressor for her because she did not have much opportunity to prove herself on the court. In her audio diary entry of December 6, P11 reported that:

Table A9. Coping for P11: Playing time and role confusion.

	December 6	January 11	January 24	February 8	Post-Season Interview
Stressors	*Playing Time* *Personal Performance* "Not getting very much time, and then getting thrown onto the floor when I was cold."	*Playing Time* *Role confusion* "Am I just not a part of the team anymore?"	*Playing Time* *Role confusion* "Today I felt the stress of being completely invisible."	*Playing Time* "I did not play."	*Playing Time* "It didn't seem that any of it [playing time] was based on performance."
Coping Strategies	*Planning & Strategizing* "I prepared myself for it on the bench and stuff like that."	*Emotional Expression* *Opposition* *Helplessness* "It's, it's not fair."	*Instrumental Action* "Push through it and tried to play my best out there."	*Distraction* "I cheered hard and stuff like that."	*Cognitive Restructuring* *Acceptance* "I can't take it internally and like think that I've done something wrong."
Outcomes	*Ineffective* "Not really [effective], I kinda crapped my pants on the floor."	*Ineffective* "I'm still stressed out, so I wasn't effective, but I don't know what I'm supposed to do."	*Ineffective* "I'm still stressed out about it … It just didn't seem like it did enough."	*Ineffective* "I wasn't that effective in dealing with this 'cause I'm still kind of mad."	*Effective* "I put less of the, um, blame on myself."

> I faced the stress of not getting very much time, and then getting thrown onto the floor when I was cold and having, like, I knew I had like, five minutes to, you know, show what I had to prove I deserve to be on the floor, which is really tough and pretty stressful. (Post-game).

In her attempt to cope with her performance and her lack of playing time, she said "I prepared myself for it on the bench and stuff like that, but how effective was in dealing with these stresses? Uh, not really, I kinda crapped my pants on the floor" (December 6, post-game).

P11 reported in another audio diary entry that she was becoming discouraged with the amount of playing time she was receiving, which contributed to the stressor of role confusion. In one particularly emotional audio dairy entry following a game in which she did not play at all, she spoke as though she was addressing the coach, saying:

> I know that I'm not going to play in close games! But do not say at the beginning of a game that 'I'm going to get everyone in' or that 'everyone has to give me their five minutes.' So am I just not a part of the team anymore? Is that it? … It's, it's not fair … And I know that I'm not going to play, just treat me like I'm a part of your team, for god's sake. (January 11, post-game).

P11 used emotional expression, helplessness and opposition in an attempt to cope with her stressors. She concluded by saying "how effective was I in dealing with these stressors? I don't know! I'm still stressed out, so I wasn't effective, but I don't know what I'm supposed to do" (January 11, post-game).

The stressors of playing time and role confusion were reported again following a practice in which P11 said she felt "completely invisible" (January 24, post-practice). In her audio diary entry, she said that:

> It just felt like [coach] did not acknowledge that I was there. I felt like a complete sub for people in practice. Like I understand that I'm not a key player, clearly. But I don't have to be a sub in practice. I need to, I want to feel like I'm still part of the team.

For P11, her inability to take part in practices was a contributing factor to her stressor of role confusion. In her post-season interview she said that she could understand not playing in games if her performance was insufficient, but she said "I think that if you're on the team you should have an equal chance to improve [in practices]." To cope with her stressors, she said "I sort of just pushed through it and tried to play my best out there," however "it just didn't seem like it did enough. Was I effective in dealing with these stressors? Not really because I'm still stressed out about it" (January 24, post-practice).

P11 also used distraction in attempting to cope with her stressors of playing time and role confusion. In her audio diary entry following a game against a rival team, she said "I cheered hard and stuff like that but I wasn't that effective in dealing with this cause I'm still kind of mad … I'm a good cheerer but that's not really why I joined the basketball team" (February 8, post-game).

P11 attempted to cope with her stressors by using a variety of strategies, including planning/strategizing, emotional expression, helplessness, opposition, instrumental action, and distraction. Reflecting on her season, P11 said that her coping only became

more effective when she stopped focusing on her goal of playing time. In her post-season interview, she said:

> I don't know, throughout the season, it seemed as though playing time wasn't as based on personal like, improvement and achievement and performance, so that, that didn't really stay as one of my goals, it just became to improve as much as I can personally.

Changing her coping attempts to include the use of cognitive restructuring and acceptance was effective in dealing with P11's stressors. In her post-season interview she concluded by saying: "through this season I just came to realize that a lot of this stuff was out of my control, so if I stopped blaming myself for it then it wouldn't stress me out so much."

Although she reported playing time and role confusion as recurring stressors, P11 said that toward the end of the season she realized that playing time was not "based on performance. So if I had a goal of getting more playing time, it just seemed like that was one of those things you're just not going to achieve" (post-season interview). She reported exploring other coping strategies such as cognitive restructuring and acceptance from then on to try and "focus on improving and [putting in] hard work instead." She said in her post-season interview that:

> I just coped with the fact that, me sitting was not based, from what I had gained or what I thought, it's not based on my personal performance, so that, because she's [coach] not saying why she's benched me, I can't take it internally and like think that I've done something wrong. Because I didn't know why.

Idiographic profile for P12. P12 was a grade 11 player who played 577 minutes during the season. Her main goal for the season was to "keep having fun and keep being positive" (pre-season interview). She elaborated on her goal, saying "I think that having fun would be most important because if I'm not having fun then I have trouble doing all the other things." In her pre-season interview P12 also said that the biggest stressor for her in the upcoming season would be role confusion because she had experienced similar stressors on other teams. Talking about other teams she had played for, she said "[I] didn't feel confident in myself. I wasn't sure if I belonged on the team … I wasn't having fun" (pre-season interview).

For P12, the stressor of role confusion was interconnected with the stressors personal performance and team dynamics. Looking ahead to the upcoming season, she said:

> If I stop playing well for like, for a period [or if] I just had a bad run or something, I think that would probably be pretty stressful for me … and I think when [teammate] comes back [from injury] there's going to be a like harder competition for, to get onto the court and I think that will be stressful too. (Pre-season interview).

In fact, 40% of her reported stressors related to personal performance or team dynamics. She first reported the stressor of team dynamics mid-way through the season, however in her audio diary entry she said that "[these] stressors were expected … because they've been building up, tensions have been building up between our coach and members of the team since the beginning of the season" (January 11, post-game).

Table A6. Coping for P12: Team dynamics.

	January 11	January 16	Post-Season Interview
Stressors	*Team Dynamics* *Coach Criticism* "Dealing with a very frustrating coach who is upsetting me greatly."	*Team Dynamics* *Role confusion* "Everyone's mad at each other right now."	*Team Dynamics* *Role confusion* "I felt lost with position so trying to like find out where I was, fit in on the team … I didn't know what [coach] wanted from me."
Coping Strategies	*Support Seeking* *Behavioural Avoidance* *Emotional Expression* "[We] had a team meeting after the game. I was just crying … the only person that I had there to talk to was my parents and I … it felt like I had been completely let down by the coaches. So I didn't, I didn't want to go talk to [coach] about anything."	*Behavioural Avoidance* "I didn't do anything, and neither did anybody else."	*Behavioural Avoidance* "I don't think I dealt with it properly … I would have talked to the coaches a lot sooner."
Outcomes	*Ineffective* "I don't think that was very effective with dealing with the stressor at all."	*Ineffective* "That was very, very ineffective."	"I'd like to think that I'm more willing to go and to talk to the coaches now… right now I feel like I would be able to do that."

In this particular situation, she said that the stressors she was facing included "dealing with a very frustrating coach who is upsetting me greatly" and "the team … ended up yelling at each other and biting each other's heads off instead of banding together and supporting each other." In her post-season interview, P6 elaborated on this incident and said that her stressors were not just dealing with the coach and her teammates' fighting, but also that:

> I felt like isolated I guess … I felt lost with [my] position, so, trying to like find out where I was, fit in on the team. That was stressful cause I was always not sure about where I stood. (Post-season interview).

P12 reported that to cope with the team's conflict, they "had a team meeting after the game, and I don't think that was very effective with dealing with the stressor at all" (January 11, post-game). However P12 said at the end of the season that seeking support from her teammates was not the only coping strategy she used to cope with her stressors. Her coping efforts after the game had also included emotional expression and seeking support from her parents (which were not reported in her audio diary entry). She said in her post-season interview: "I couldn't talk, I was just crying … I guess the only person that I had there to talk to was my parents" (post-season interview). She said that she also used escape in order to avoid her coaches because she "didn't want to go talk to them about anything … it felt like I was, had been completely let down by the coaches" (post-season interview). P12 said that her coping efforts following this game were ineffective and that "I didn't solve anything. I was still unhappy, I was still confused" (post-season interview).

In her next audio diary entry, P12 reported the stressor of team dynamics once again, this time following a team meeting in which the coach and the team had attempted to resolve the conflict they were experiencing. After the meeting, P12 said that "it was just stressful just because of how everyone's mad at each other right now" (January 16, post-practice). She said that to cope with the stressor, "I didn't do anything, and neither did anybody else. And that was very, very ineffective." P12 reported in her post-season interview that she did learn from her ineffective attempts at coping with her stressors, saying:

> As much as I didn't want to talk to the coaches, I think that I should have taken that step and I should have been the one to talk to them and know that I, so just to know like even if it didn't help, that I had tried everything and that I had, I had tried to be accountable like, to try and make things better for myself.

Over the course of the season, the stressor of role confusion was recurrent for P12 and it was interconnected with the stressors of team dynamics and personal performance. In her post-season interview, she reflected on her stressors and said "feeling like I wasn't part of the team … or like that I wasn't performing well, that could have been solved so much sooner before it actually became a problem." She reported that she knew her coping was ineffective, but did not want to approach the coaches to deal with her stressors, saying that:

> When I was having difficulty and stuff I wanted to go talk to her and I wanted to go like ask her for help but I didn't want to be a bother. I felt like my problems weren't big enough to affect the whole team … so I

> didn't want to like bother her with that. So that was stressful because I had this issue that I wanted to, I wanted help with it but I didn't know how to go ask her for it. (Post-season interview).

In retrospect, P12 said that she had gained an appreciation of her coping attempts and realized that they were ineffective in dealing with her stressors of personal performance, role confusion, and team dynamics. She said that in the future:

> I'd like to think that I'm more willing to go and to talk to the coaches now, just not maybe because they expect me to get anything out of it, but just to know that I tried to, like I, I do try. I tried to take the steps so I don't know if that's actually going to pan out next season … but ah, right now I feel like I would be able to do that. (Post-season interview).

Idiographic Profile for P13. P13 was a highly competitive grade 11 player who played 594 minutes during the season and whose goal for the season was to improve her performance, as well as to be a leader on the team. She said in her pre-season interview "I want to go to provincials this year." P13 admitted that "I don't deal with failure. I can't, I'm not that kind of person, I have very high standards" (pre-season interview) and she said in her post- season interview that "I think it's just stressful that I don't understand why not everyone, like is giving it their all or whatever." She anticipated that the team's dynamics would be a stressor for her during the season, as it could impede the team's performance on the court and prevent the team from going to provincials. She said:

Table A8. Coping for P13: Team dynamics.

	Pre-Season Interview	January 11	Post-Season Interview
Stressors	*Team Dynamics* "Everyone bitches and complains about everything and it's just really frustrating."	*Team Dynamics* "It felt like there was like five people who really wanted to win, um, the rest of the people just had bad attitudes."	*Team Dynamics* "[my teammates] had gotten into a little bit of a fight … there has been some tension between us."
Coping Strategies	*Opposition* "If someone yells at me and puts me down I'm going to prove them wrong."	*Opposition* *Acceptance* "It was a screaming match." "We'll have to live through it."	*Mental Withdrawal* *Information Seeking* *Cognitive Restructuring* "We just like kind of ignored it and then after practice we talked about it like as a team." "Towards the end of the season I just kind of learned to … just try and see what the positives were."
Outcomes	*Ineffective* "It's just really frustrating."	*Ineffective* "It just made me really frustrated."	*Effective* "I think we were really effective in dealing with the stressors."

> People [are already] bitching and complaining at each other. If we're like that and we don't treat our team like a family, we're going to lose. And if, if no one, if we're like that we ah obviously going to lose. We're going to lose terribly. And it's just frustrating. (Pre-season interview).

P13 went on to say that the source of the team's conflict was due to the athletes' highly competitive outlook, and that:

> Our team has so much attitude. Every single person on the team has the exact same personality. So they, if one person doesn't agree with me, [she] totally disagrees with me, gets the whole team into it and everyone bitches and complains about everything and it's just really frustrating. (Pre-season interview).

P13 said that to cope with the stressor of team dynamics, she would typically become confrontational and use opposition, and she said that "when it comes down to if someone yells at me and puts me down I'm going to prove them wrong … sometimes like I let my emotions get the better of me and I say something I shouldn't" (pre-season interview).

P13 first reported the stressor team dynamics in an audio diary entry after a game the team had lost which resulted in the athletes yelling at one another during a post-game meeting. P13 said:

> It was a really frustrating game because it felt like there was like five people who really wanted to win, um, the rest of the people just had bad attitudes and were sitting on the bench, mocking players, being rude, not taking the game seriously, and not, and weren't true team players. And it's just really frustrating. (January 11, post-game).

P13 reported using acceptance to cope with the stressor of team dynamics, saying "I just think that everyone's on a different page so there will be some stressors but we'll have to live through it." (January 11, post-game). In her post-season interview, she said that in the team meeting "all of our emotions came out and it just like … it was a screaming match." P13 reported in her audio diary entry of January 11 that the stressor of team dynamics was "really frustrating" and coping by using opposition and acceptance was not effective.

Following a practice on February 17, P13 reported team dynamics as a stressor in her audio diary, saying that she and some of her teammates:

> … had gotten into a little bit of a fight just because [name] feels like [we] aren't passing to her because we don't like her or some excuse like that. And these stressors are expected just because there has been some tension between us [teammates].

In order to cope with these stressors, P13 said that during the practice, "we just like kind of ignored it and then after practice we talked about it like as a team" (February 17, post-practice). She went on to say in her audio diary that using mental withdrawal and then information seeking to discuss the issue after practice was "really effective in dealing with the stressors … because it'll just bring us closer as a team."

In her post-season interview, P13 said that her coping had changed over the course of the season from ineffective attempts at using opposition to more effective strategies of using acceptance, mental withdrawal, and information seeking. She also tried to use cognitive restructuring in coping with the stressor of team dynamics, saying that:

> At the beginning of the season I was always angry and venting. And then towards the end of the season I just kind of learned to just be like, whatever happens, and just try and see what the positives were. (Post-season interview).

P13 said that she viewed herself as a leader on the team for the following season, and that her experiences would help her in coping with similar situations concerning team dynamics in the future. She concluded her post-season interview by saying:

> Next year I have to just, because all those girls that are coming up are really sensitive in that way, I just have to be more understanding and care about people more … I think it's going to be fine next year, I will be able to deal with it.

P13 reported team dynamics as a recurring stressor during the season and explored coping strategies such as opposition, acceptance, mental withdrawal, information seeking and cognitive restructuring. She said that she was able to reflect on her coping attempts in order to learn from them and cope effectively with future stressors.